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BOSTON UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL

Thesis

JOHN GODFREY SAXE:
HIS PLACE AMONG AMERICAN HUMORISTS

by

Marian Ruth Essery
(A.B., Boston University, 1922)

submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts.

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JOHN GODFREY SAXE:

HIS PLACE AMONG AMERICAN HUMORISTS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The French say that forty lines may suffice to bestow literary immortality on a writer; and so it seems imperative to bring to the attention of the American public the name of John Godfrey Saxe, the once pre-eminently popular Vermont poet, humorist, lawyer, State's attorney and twice candidate for Governor of his native state, editor, and lyceum lecturer. It is the purpose of this thesis to call attention to the name of John Godfrey Saxe, the genial New England poet now so completely forgotten; and to estimate his place in American letters. This thesis also has as its purpose to show why this once esteemed poet has been so entirely eclipsed by later humorists, and to suggest that he belongs in the evolutionary development of columnist writers in America. Care will be given to recognize the function of the newspaper as a medium for literature. Another definite purpose of this thesis is to write a more composite biography of Saxe's life, than has

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heretofore been done, for the material for this sketch has been gathered from a number of various sources. In collecting data for this work, the writer has attempted to correct a number of biographical errors. The main purpose of this thesis, however, is an analysis of Saxe's humor, with some classification and criticism of his comedy devices, with reference to the conditions, political, social, and local, that determined them and made his range. A secondary purpose of this thesis is to compile a revised, corrected, and more complete bibliography of John Godfrey Saxe than has previously existed.

The difficulties encountered in gathering material for this thesis have been many, as may be imagined when it is stated that the card catalog of the University of Kentucky library did not contain a single work by or about this author. However, an encouraging letter from Dorothy Canfield Fisher, who wrote, "It's good news to know that an A. M. thesis is to be written on John Godfrey Saxe, who is still held in high and loyal esteem in Vermont," gave the writer a new interest in following up the many kind suggestions which Mrs. Fisher made. A similar letter came from Miss Ella Titus, of the Harvard Library, who wrote, "You must write his biography. I don't find that anyone has

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done it yet. Harvard hasn't a sign of a book about him, and there isn't one mentioned in the cyclopedia article that I read, nor in the Books of Print, 1928 of the American Catalogue." Helpful and inspiring letters came from many prominent professors of English, and librarians all over the state of Vermont. Perhaps one of the most fruitful bits of counsel of this entire research came from Mr. Harold Rugg, assistant librarian at Dartmouth College, who most graciously loaned a rare and costly biography of Saxe by Russell W. Taft. In fact this manuscript is one of the eight copies now extant in the United States. Special appreciation is due Miss Viola C. White, Curator of the Abernethy Library, Middlebury, Vermont, who copied for the writer from various obscure sources many pages of interesting data about Saxe. A gratifying letter with additional information was received from Miss Mary Sollace Saxe, a niece of the poet. Miss Saxe is at present a retired librarian of the West Mount Public Library, Montreal, Canada.

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CHAPTER II

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN GODFREY SAXE

Before beginning an analysis of the humor of this poet, or any classification and criticism of his comedy devices, it seems fitting to state a few biographical facts about John Godfrey Saxe. Regarding the poet's parents, Mr. Russell Taft says,

"Peter Saxe, store-keeper, mill-owner, and local politician married, in 1813, Elizabeth Jewett, and their second son, for whom a niche at least may be reserved in America's literary Valhalla, is the subject of the present sketch. John Godfrey Saxe was born in Highgate, Vermont on June 2, 1816, one day later than Charles Gamage Eastman, Vermont's lyric poet."¹

Saxe's early years were uneventful. From the age of nine to seventeen he attended district school, and worked in his father's mill. Mrs. Carolyn Brown Freer, the teacher of the district school, portrayed him as "a lively, mischievous and sometimes unruly lad, to whose shoulder she was many a time obliged to apply the rod."²

During the years 1833 and '34 Saxe attended the Grammar School of St. Albans, where he prepared for college. In 1835 he entered Wesleyan University,

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1. Taft, Russel W. John Godfrey Saxe, Burlington
1900 p. 3
 2. Ibid p. 4

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1. Tait, Russell T.	John Godfrey Saxe, Burlington
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Middletown, Conn, but he did not remain there the entire year. However, in the fall of 1836, he entered the sophomore class of Middlebury College. During his college course, Saxe became an ardent lover of the classics - and this love did not abate in after life, as can be seen in his frequent allusions in his poems to Latin authors.

"Saxe's first literary efforts were published about the beginning of his junior year in the local prints. My Uncle William or Love vs Law was his first printed effort, and was meritorious chiefly on account of its brevity. The Autobiography of a Pocket Knife, the next offspring of his budding fancy, also shows no palpable traces of genius. Later on Saxe became a member of the 'Tub Philosophers a la Diogenes' who turned loose their literary talent on the Green Mountain Argos."³

In 1839 Saxe was graduated from Middlebury and then went to Lewiston, near Lockport, N. Y. to study law. In 1841, he returned to Vermont and on September 9, he married Miss Sophia Newell Sollace, a sister of one of his classmates, and daughter of the Honorable Calvin T. Sollace of Bridport, Vt.

In September 1843, Saxe was admitted to the bar in St. Albans; and for the next seven years he practiced law in both St. Albans and Highgate. For one year

3. Ibid p.14

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In 1859 Saxe was graduated from Middlebury and then went to Lewiston, near Portland, N. Y. to study law. In 1861, he returned to Vermont and on September 2, he married Miss Sophia Sewall Solace, a sister of one of his classmates, and daughter of the Honorable Calvin T. Solace of Bridport, Vt.

In September 1863, Saxe was admitted to the bar in St. Albans; and for the next seven years he practiced law in both St. Albans and Highgate. For one year

1847-48 Saxe was Superintendent of the Common Schools of Franklin County.

In 1850 he removed to Burlington, and for ten years he resided in that city. He was elected state's attorney of Chittenden County in 1851. Finding the practice of law irksome, he abandoned it, and with a few thousand dollars inherited from his father in 1850 he purchased the Vermont Sentinel, a democratic weekly published in Burlington, Vt. This paper he edited for six years. This was a wise move as Mr. Taft says,

"Mr. Saxe rightly turned to journalism as offering the readiest means of applying his talents and his tastes. His editorial labors interested him by bringing him into contact with varied phases of humanity and led to unexpected results by involving him in the small politics of the day." ⁴

In 1856 he was appointed U. S. deputy collector of customs, and in 1859 and 1860 he ran for Governor of Vermont on the democratic ticket. This last named honor was complimentary as Vermont was not strongly enough democratic to elect any executive. Saxe considered the matter jocosely as can be seen by the closing sentences of a letter in which he accepted the nomination, "For further political views, and opinions, I will refer you to my inaugural message." ⁵

4. Ibid p. 38

5. Ibid p. 39

1847-48 term was Superintendent of the Common Schools of Franklin County. In 1850 he removed to Burlington, and for two years he resided in that city. He was elected state's attorney of Chittenden County in 1851. Finding the practice of law unprofitable, he abandoned it, and with a few thousand dollars inherited from his father in 1850 he purchased the Vermont Sentinel, a democratic weekly published in Burlington, Vt. This paper he edited for six years. This was likewise done by Mr. Tolt.

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4. 1814 p. 38
5. 1814 p. 39

"In 1846 Saxe's first published volume came from the press, Progress, a Satire. It was dedicated to Oliver Wendell Holmes after his fashion;

'To Oliver Wendell Holmes, as a slight token of the admiration which the writer entertains for his fine poetical genius; his unequalled power of playful satire, and his terse and felicitous versification, this poem is respectfully inscribed by his obliged friend, the author'." ⁶

In this connection it is essential to call the attention of the reader to an error in Mr. Taft's biography regarding the date of his first published edition, for on page 33 of his book Mr. Taft states, "In 1849 Saxe's first collected edition was issued at the instance of James T. Fields, the publisher, and from then on, Saxe was a public character in American letters." ⁷ Likewise, the same error in date of publication is found in an anonymous pamphlet, issued by the State of Vermont, Free Public Library Department, Montpelier, which records, "His (referring to Saxe) first volume of poems appeared in 1849 and during the active period of his literary work more than forty editions of his poems were published in America and Europe. He was noted for his humor and was a famous punster." ⁸ That 1846 is the correct

6. Ibid p.29-30.

7. Ibid p.33.

8. Anonymous pamphlet - State of Vt. Free Public Library Dept. Montpelier.

"In 1848 Bane's first published volume came from the press, Prose and Poetry. It was dedicated to Oliver Wendell Holmes after his death; To Oliver Wendell Holmes, as a slight token of the admiration which the writer entertains for his fine poetical genius; his unqualified power of his native nature, and his terse and Yaddone variation, this poem is respectfully inscribed by his obliged friend, the author."

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- 6. 1848 p. 82-83.
 - 7. 1848 p. 83.
 - 8. Anonymous pamphlet - State of Vt. Free Public Library Dept. Montpelier.

date can be seen by reference to Library of Congress Cards. In this respect The Americana states, "His reputation as a humorous poet was considerable during the mid century, his verses often appearing in Harper's magazine, Atlantic Monthly, and in the Knickerbocker magazine. He published Progress, a satirical poem, 1846." ⁹ The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography says, "In 1846 he published a volume of poems including Progress, a satire, many of which had appeared in the Knickerbocker magazine." ¹⁰ Hence it can be readily seen that 1846 is the correct date of this first publication of Saxe's poems.

A day long-looked-for in Saxe's life arrived in 1856, for no longer needing to rely on journalism for a living, he sold the Sentinel and trusted to literature for a living.¹¹ As his biographer said of this move, "The trust was securely placed, for, through economical treatment of his income he acquired means which afforded him an opportunity for leisure and travel." ¹²

9. The Americana V.24 p.339.

10. The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography p.438.

11. Taft, R. W. John Godfrey Saxe Burlington, Vt.
1900 p. 45.

12. Ibid. p. 45.

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2. The Americanist, V. 24, p. 332.
 3. The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography, p. 442.
 4. Life of S. W. John Godfrey Saxe, Burlington, Vt., 1900, p. 43.
 5. Ibid., p. 43.

In 1860 he returned to Albany, New York, where he became an editor of the Albany Evening Journal.¹³ He also wrote editorials for the Albany Morning Argus. "The Honorable William Cassidy, proprietor of the latter sheet, was a democrat and at that time perhaps the nearest personal friend of the poet and to him Saxe dedicated the Highgate edition (1871) of his poems." ¹⁴ Saxe occasionally wrote criticisms and book review for the Argus.

In 1866 Middlebury College, Saxe's Alma Mater, conferred on him the L. L. D. degree. "Prior to this he had won a name in literature, and as an attractive lecturer, his facility as a writer of humorous verse being his distinguishing characteristic." ¹⁵

No sketch, regardless how brief, would be complete without mention of the charming social character of the poet, whose physical attractiveness never failed to appeal to those with whom he came in contact. People who met him were charmed with his genial personality and wit, and he became a national favorite. He was a brilliant conversationalist, and was in his element at the fashionable resort of Saratoga Springs, which he visited for twenty-

13. Ibid p.45.

14. Ibid p.52.

15. The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography p.438.

In 1880 he returned to Albany, New York, where he became an editor of the Albany Evening Journal. He also wrote editorials for the Albany Morning News. "The Honorable William Cassady, proprietor of the latter sheet, was a descendant and at that time perhaps the nearest personal friend of the poet and to him Bane dedicated the Highgate edition (1871) of his poems." In Bane occasionally wrote criticisms and book reviews for the

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- 13. 1811 p. 43.
 - 14. 1811 p. 43.
 - 15. The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography p. 438.

three consecutive summers. ¹⁶ "His verses were quoted both at home and abroad, and such was his popularity that he was soon obliged to leave prose and the press and move to Albany and confine his works to poetry and to the lecture platform. He lived in Albany from 1860-70, and during these years visited England twice, where he was much sought after by literary people." ¹⁷

The 1867 visit to Europe added much to Saxe's fame as well as to his pecuniary success. "The Cockney, one of Saxe's wittiest sketches, is reminiscent of this trip."¹⁸ While in England he was the guest of the late George Peabody, who was instrumental in arranging for Saxe to give many lectures. The poet was hailed by the English press as "A second Tom Hood, and when he returned in the fall, he brought with him many gifts from England's best people. During the years from 1855 to 1870, one would seldom pick up a paper which did not contain some joke or witty speech from the poet's pen." ¹⁹

The year 1846 marked the beginning of the poet's popularity as a lecturer, especially at college commencements and similar functions. "He read Progress before

16. Anonymous pamphlet -State of Vt. Free Public Library Dept.

17. Anonymous pamphlet - State of Vt. Free

18. Taft p. 56.

19. Anonymous pamphlet -State of Vt. Free

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The 1887 visit to Europe added much to Saxe's fame as well as to his pecuniary success. "The Reverend, one of Saxe's brilliant sketches, is characteristic of this trip." 18

While in England he was the guest of the late George Peabody, who was instrumental in arranging for Saxe to give many lectures. The poet was hailed by the English press as "A second Tom Hood, and when he returned in the fall, he brought with him many gifts from England's best people. During the years from 1885 to 1890, one would seldom pick up a paper which did not contain some joke or witty speech from the poet's pen." 19

The year 1888 marked the beginning of the poet's popularity as a lecturer, especially at college commencements and similar functions. "He read Prose before

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16. Anonymous pamphlet - State of Vt. Free Public Library Dep.
 17. Anonymous pamphlet - State of Vt. Free
 18. Gift p. 38.
 19. Anonymous pamphlet - State of Vt. Free

the Middlebury Alumni in 1846; The Times before the Boston Mercantile Library Association in 1849; Carmen Laetum at Middlebury College in 1850 at their semi-centennial celebration; and New England at the Hamilton College Commencement of 1849." 20

Regarding his wide spread popularity as a lecturer Mr. Taft states,

"It was at this time (1874) that the popular lecture was rampant as a source of public education and incidentally as a replenisher of depleted literary exchequers; and no leading 'lecture course' was thought complete unless it contained the name of the foremost poet of satire and humor. Saxe drew equally well with Wendell Phillips, George William Curtis, Henry Ward Beecher, Rev. Dr. E. H. Chapin, Anna E. Dickinson, and others who, in the decade from 1859, were kept on the go from early fall until the spring apples were ripe --- Saxe had but to set the date and name his price, as an opportunity to see the author of Proud Miss McBride was not to be missed by the lecture going people of the day. To the eyes of the audience, at least, the investment must have seemed a wise one, for Saxe was a remarkably handsome man. He was six feet two inches tall, proudly erect and muscular, with a large round and finely poised head set upon broad and stalwart shoulders." 21

About this same phase of his career, it is recorded,

"The poet's lectures were delivered from Main to California, and he was in great demand. During the troublesome years just previous to the Civil War he spent many of his winters in the Southern States, and was a guest at many of the old manor houses, where he was welcomed because of his abundance of good cheer and his well known political views." 22

20. Taft, R. W. p. 28.

21. Ibid p. 51.

22. Anonymous pamphlet - State of Vt. Free Public Library Dept.

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Library at Middlebury College in 1850 at their semi-
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30. Telf. W. W. p. 28.
31. Ibid. p. 31.
32. Anonymous pamphlet - State of Vt. Free Public
Library Dept.

"Again deciding to change his residence, Mr. Saxe, in 1872, removed to Brooklyn, N. Y., where he bought a home at number 28 First Place. The location was one of the coolest and pleasantest in the city, while among the poet's neighbors were Austin Corbin, Demas Barnes, the Rev. Dr. Ludlow, and other people of culture and refinement." ²³

This delightful home, referred to in a poem found in the poet's last collection of verse, was where Saxe had anticipated spending the remaining years of his life in happiness and contentment. But little did he realize how heavily the hand of Fate was to be laid upon him; and yet it would almost seem as if he had had a premonition of the sorrows that were soon to follow, for almost immediately after establishing his residence in Brooklyn he bought a very beautiful family burying lot in Greenwood Cemetery. ²⁴ Nor indeed was this too precipitately done, for his first sorrow came in 1874, when his youngest daughter, Laura, who had contracted lung trouble at a boarding school in Massachusetts, died. ²⁵

The next spring (1875) ^{when the poet was} while returning home at the close of a lecture tour in the South, the sleeping car in which Saxe had his berth was derailed and thrown down a steep embankment, near Wheeling, West Virginia. One of the fellow passengers who had escaped returned to look

23. Taft, R. W. p. 59.

24. Ibid p. 61.

25. Ibid p. 61.

"Again deciding to change his residence, Mr. Saxe, in 1878, removed to Brooklyn, N. Y., where he bought a house at number 28 First Street. The location was one of the coolest and pleasantest in the city, while among the guest's neighbors were Austin Corbin, James Barnes, the Rev. Dr. Andrew, and other people of culture and refinement."

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22. Feb. 1. 79.	2. 80.
23. Feb. 1. 81.	2. 81.
24. Feb. 1. 81.	2. 81.

for a sum of money which he had left behind, and in

"returning to the car he stumbled upon the bruised and insensible poet wedged between heavy timbers. Mr. Saxe was thereby rescued from a revolting death, for the sleeper in which he was found soon became a mass of seething flames. Even under these fearful circumstances the poet's wit did not fail him, for when someone asked him how he liked Riding on the Rail now, he replied, 'a great deal better than riding off from it'." ²⁶

Physically Saxe seemed to suffer no serious consequences from this accident, but his nervous system suffered a shock from which it never rallied, and this accident was undoubtedly the cause of the deep melancholia which enshrouded the poet in his last years. ²⁷

"Excepting the ill-starred lecture tour referred to, Mr. Saxe's last appearance before the general public was on September 27, 1873, when he read an ode on the occasion of the unveiling of a bust of John Howard Payne, in Prospect Park, Brooklyn. However, true to fraternal promptings, he read some prandial verses at Delmonico's on April 8, 1874, the occasion being a festival of the Forty-first Annual Convention of Psi Upsilon." ²⁸ (Saxe had been initiated as an honorary member into Alpha Chapter of this fraternity in Harvard in 1753,²⁹ and had been a devoted member of this fraternity all his life)

Leisure Day Rhymes, the poet's last collection came from the press in 1875. This collection lacked the pristine vigor and virility of his earlier verses. In this collection he deals with more placid themes and

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26. Ibid p. 61-62.
 27. Ibid p. 62.
 28. Ibid p. 63.
 29. Ibid p. 20.

for a sum of money which he had left behind, and in
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 from this accident, but his nervous system suffered a
 shock from which it never rallied, and this accident was
 undoubtedly the cause of the deep melancholia which

enslaved the poet in his last years.

"Unhappily the ill-starred journey soon re-
 turned to Mr. Kane's last appearance before the
 general public was on September 27, 1873, when he
 read as one of the occasions of the unveiling of a
 bust of John Howard Payne, in Prospect Park, Brooklyn.
 However, true to traditional promptings, he read some
 original verses of Whitman's on April 8, 1874, the
 occasion being a festival of the Forty-first Annual
 Convention of the Free Press. (Kane had been
 initiated as an honorary member into the Order
 of the Free Press in January, 1873, and had been
 a devoted member of this fraternity all his life.)

Leaves for the People, the poet's last collection came

from the press in 1875. This collection lacked the
 pristine vigor and virility of his earlier verses. In
 this collection he dealt with more placid themes and

26. 1874	p. 61-62
27. 1874	p. 63
28. 1874	p. 64
29. 1874	p. 50

more reference is found to theological subjects. ³⁰

Death again visited the Saxe home in 1879, this time claiming for its victim the poet's eldest and favorite daughter Sarah. A still more crushing blow followed the next year when Mrs. Saxe, who had been the noblest of noble wives for forty years, was snatched from him. But grim death was not through, for in 1881 he claimed the poet's solely remaining daughter, Harriet. ³¹ A little later the wife of his eldest son, John, was taken; and nine weeks following this dire tragedy the poet's son John was found dead in bed.

"Thus in the brief space of seven years, had the poet's wife, his three daughters, his eldest son, and his daughter-in-law crossed the mystic river before his very eyes. What wonder then, that death seemed to him his best friend as with whitened locks, bent form, and sad eyes he wearily sought shelter with his only surviving child, Charles, beneath whose roof tree he was to spend the last sorrowful years of his life, brooding hopelessly in solitude over his afflictions, his mind still haunted by joyous memories of the golden past." ³²

For a while after Saxe came to live with his son Charles, he tried to recover some of his wonted bouyancy of spirit, but it was of no avail,

"and in 1884 he withdrew altogether from the eyes of men - - - hardly a person knew that one (Saxe) who, in his time, did more than any other to brighten the world around him, was ending his days apart from his

30. Ibid p.63.
 31. Ibid p. 65.
 32. Ibid p.68

more reference is found to theological subjects. 30
 Death again visited the Saxe home in 1875, this time
 claiming for its victim the poet's eldest and favorite
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 next year when Mrs. Saxe, who had been the object of
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 hopelessly in solitude over his afflictions, his mind
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 For a while after Saxe came to live with his son
 Charles, he tried to recover some of his mental buoyancy
 of spirit, but it was of no avail.

"And in 1884 he withdrew altogether from the
 eyes of men - - - hardly a person knew that one (Saxe)
 who, in his time, did more than any other to enlighten the
 world around him, was ending his days apart from his

30. 1814	p. 33.
31. 1815	p. 33.
32. 1815	p. 33.

fellow-men, crushed by bereavements and the victim of a settled melancholy. It is one of the eccentricities of fate that a man whose mission was to gladden others should thus drag out his last years, dead to the world which was once so kind to him. In the poet's own words, 'Isn't it queer that one who made others laugh should end his days so in sorrow.'³³

What a tragic contrast was the condition of the genial humorist to that of the previous years when

"his verses were eagerly accepted by the leading periodicals, when he was the nation's wit and humorist whose delicious rhymes brought to himself fame and a competence, and to many a household the cheerful smile or hearty laugh. Even across the sea he was known as the 'Thomas Hood of America' yet at sixty-five his condition much resembled the closing days of Scott, Southey, Cowper, and Tom Moore."³⁴

The last three years of the once exuberant poet were pathetic in the extreme. Saxe now made no effort to combat his melancholia. "His light had gone out forever; not a gleam recalled the brilliant flashes of wit that had played so merrily across the literary firmament of twenty years agone, and his last years afford but another instance of the fatality that seems especially to beset the sons of laughter."³⁵ The tragedy of the poet's own words seem burned deeply in the reader's mind as he scans, the poem Comic Miseries which says,

33. Ibid p.69.
 34. Ibid p.67.
 35. Ibid p.67.

followed, crowded by developments and the vision of a settled melancholy. It is one of the peculiarities of fate that a man whose mission was to lighten others should thus drag out his last years, dead to the world which was once so kind to him. In the poet's own words, 'I am a guest that one who made others laugh should and his days so in sorrow.' 1933

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"his verses were eagerly accepted by the leading periodicals, when he was the nation's wit and humorist whose delicious rhymes brought to himself fame and a competence, and to many a household the cheerful smile of happy laughter. Even across the sea he was known as the 'Thames God of America', yet at sixty-five his condition was such resembled the classic days of Scott, Southey, Gayer, and Tom Moore." 32

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rather instance of the fatality that seems especially

to beset the sons of laughter." 33 The tragedy of the

poet's own words seem burned deeply in the reader's mind

as he scans, the poem Comic Minister which says,

32. 1913
33. 1913
34. 1913
35. 1913

"My dear young friend, whose shining wit
 Sets all the room ablaze,
 Don't think yourself a happy dog
 For all your merry ways;
 But learn to wear a sober phiz,
 Be stupid if you can,
 It's a very serious thing
 To be a funny man." ³⁶

The "long craving for the final summons to join the loved ones who had gone before"³⁷ was satisfied, for on March 31, 1887, the name of John Godfrey Saxe was joined to the long list of immortals whose literary genius still lights the dark prosaic world.

The Century Magazine for June 1886 contains the following lines to the poet, written by C. S. Percival.³⁸

"O genial Saxe whose radiant wit
 Flashed like the lightning from the sky,
 But, though each flash as keenly hit,
 Wounded but what deserved to die --
 Alas! the cloud that shrouds the day
 On gathering darkness, fold on fold
 Serves not as background for the play
 Of those bright gleams that charmed of old.
 Yet charms not now his blithesome lay,
 Nor flowery mead in 'verdure clad'.
 The world that laughed when thou wast gay,
 Now weeps to know that thou art sad."

"The State of Vermont has erected at the old homestead at Highgate a monument to his memory, which was unveiled in August 1920. In 1916 Middlebury College observed the hundredth anniversary of the poet's birth and reciprocated his services in officiating as the Poet on the occasion of Middlebury's fiftieth anniversary by conferring upon his grandson, and namesake, John G. Saxe, of New York, the degree of Doctor of Laws."³⁹

36. Ibid p. 39.

37. Ibid p. 73.

38. Ibid p. 74.

39. Anonymous pamphlet - State of Vt.

"My dear young friend, whose shining wit
 Sets all the room ablaze,
 Don't think yourself a happy dog
 For all your merry ways;
 But learn to wear a sober brow,
 Be stupid if you can,
 It's a very serious thing
 To be a funny man." 37

The "long craving for the final answer to join the
 loved ones who had gone before" 37 was satisfied, for on
 March 31, 1887, the name of John Bradley Saxe was joined
 to the long list of immortals whose literary genius still
 lights the dark prosaic world.

The Century Magazine for June 1888 contains the

following lines to the poet, written by C. S. Forster.

"O genial Saxe whose radiant wit
 Flashed like the lightning from the sky,
 Not, though each flash as keenly hit,
 Wounded but what deserved to die --
 Alas the cloud that shrouds the day
 On gathering darkness, fold or fold
 Gathers not as background for the play
 Of those bright flames that charmed of old.
 Yet charms not now his blithesome lay,
 Nor flowers mead in verdant clad.
 The world that laughed when thou wast gay,
 Now weeps to know that thou art dead." 38

"The State of Vermont has erected at the old homestead
 at Highgate a monument to his memory, which was un-
 veiled in August 1930. In 1918 Middlebury College
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 birth and recognized his services in official
 as the poet on the occasion of Middlebury's fiftieth
 anniversary by conferring upon his grandson, and
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 Doctor of Laws." 39

36. Ibid	p. 32.
37. Ibid	p. 32.
38. Ibid	p. 32.
39. Anonymous pamphlet - State of Vt.	

For this occasion, commemorating the memory of Saxe,
a poem was written by Rev. Wm Colton Clark of South Hero,
Vermont. The poem follows:

John Godfrey Saxe

"In Highgate town a poet grew,
The ways of country folk he knew;
Among the neighbors he was one
Of ready speech and full of fun,
Participating in the joys
Of hale and hearty girls and boys.

To manhood grown his active mind
To literary work inclined;
As journalist with facile pen
He could portray the ways of men,
With fitting praise and friendly word
Or satire keen as sharpened sword.

As poet he attained renown
Not only in his native town,
In circle large his fame was spread
Where'er his clever verse was read,
His wit and wisdom recognized,
His timely counsel highly prized.

His memory should be preserved
His sayings carefully conserved,
Vermont should honor well the name
Of John G. Saxe and spread his fame,
A sage with clear discerning mind
A man at heart humane and kind."⁴⁰

40. The Vermonter V. 38 No. 4. April 1933 p.96
White River Junction, Vt.

For this occasion, commemorating the memory of Saxe,
a poem was written by Rev. Wm Colton Clark of South Hero,
Vermont. The poem follows:

John Gadsden Saxe

In Highgate town a poet grew,
The way of country folk he knew;
Among the neighbors he was one
Of ready speech and full of fun,
Participating in the joys
Of hale and hearty girls and boys.
He manhood gave his active mind
To literary work inclined;
As journalist with facile pen
He could portray the ways of men,
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A sage with clear discerning mind,
A man of heart humane and kind.

40. The Vermonters V. 32 No. 4 April 1933 p. 38
White River Junction, Vt.

CHAPTER III

A SURVEY OF SOME AMERICAN HUMORISTS 1830-65.

A merry heart doeth good like medicine. Laugh and the world laughs with you; weep and you weep alone. The fundamental truth of these old proverbs has always been recognized; but it has been left for the moderns to teach the world the commercial value of laughter, and to convince the every day man of the street that humor makes a deep and lasting contribution to his happiness. Notice what the practical man of letters, William P. Trent, says in this respect, "There are times in the life of every nation, whether it be a monarchy or a republic when the disposition and the ability to laugh seem alone to safeguard society. Democritus is a better patron saint than Heraclitus." ¹

This merry little god, laughter, has indelibly inscribed men's names on the literary scroll of immortality.

The Bookman of June 1916 concurs in this opinion:

"John Godfrey Saxe has outlined many of the writers of his day because he realized that the mission of mirth and humor was to restore the balance which is frequently lost by the weight of so much that is drudgery in life. Even a vein of jests is soon worked out; but mirth is a perennial flower. That is why this son of Vermont is not forgotten, though he died more than a quarter of a century ago." ²

1. Trent, William P. A. History of American Literature
N. Y. G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1922 p.536.

2. Bookman, N. Y. Dodd, Mead & Co. V. 43 p. 392 June 1916

CHAPTER III

A SURVEY OF SOME AMERICAN HUMORISTS 1830-60.

A merry heart beats good like medicine. Laugh and the world laughs with you; weep and you weep alone. The fundamental truth of these old proverbs has always been recognized; but it has been left for the moderns to teach the world the commercial value of laughter, and to convince the every day man of the street that humor makes a deep and lasting contribution to his happiness. Notice what the practical man of letters, William F. Floyd, says in this respect. "There are times in the life of every nation, whether it be a monarchy or a republic when the disposition and the ability to laugh seem alone to save a hard society. Democracy is a better patron saint than Heracles."

This merry little god, laughter, has indubitably inscribed man's names on the literary scroll of immortality.

The Bookman of June 1915 concurs in this opinion:

"John Galfreyaxe has outlined many of the writers of his day because he realized that the mission of mirth and humor was to restore the balance which is constantly lost by the weight of so much that is drab and ugly in life. Even a vein of jest is soon worked out; but mirth is a perennial flower. That is why this son of Vermont is not forgotten, though he died more than a quarter of a century ago."

1. Floyd, William F. A History of American Literature. N. Y. C. P. Putnam's Sons, 1923. p. 336.
2. Bookman, N. Y. Book, May & Co. V. 43. p. 385 June 1915.

Many have recognized the frolicsome, bouyant gaiety which abounds everywhere when the jovial, carefree god, laughter, enters; but it has been left to Mr. William P. Trent to paint out the civic service which laughter renders to America, "It is probably not an exaggeration to say that American humorists have played a great part in rendering the masses of the people more and more homogeneous. This role was especially forced on them after the accession of Jackson because of the great influx of foreign immigrants." ³

Rightly, the question arises when did America give cognizance to men of wit? The answer comes from the pen of this same literary man, Mr. Trent, who says, "It seems fair to say that before 1830 there was little truly American humor, and after that date a good deal that Americans have some right to claim as peculiarly their own." ⁴ The philosophical mind will find interest in accounting for this birth of humor, and many theories might be offered as partial explanation. But history submits this suggestion:

"The period between the accession of Jackson and the death of Lincoln is rich in material for

3. Trent, Wm P. A History of Am. Lit. p. 516.

4. Ibid p. 516.

Many have recognized the traditional, dogmatic quality which abounds everywhere when the jovial, careless god, laughter, enters; but it has been left to Mr. William F. Trent to point out the civic service which laughter

renders to America. "It is probably not an exaggeration to say that American humorists have played a great part in rendering the masses of the people more and more homogeneous. This role was especially forced on them after the accession of Jackson because of the great influx of foreign immigrants."³

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fair to say that before 1830 there was little truly American humor, and after that date a good deal that Americans have some right to claim as peculiarly their own."⁴ The philosophical mind will find interest in accounting for the birth of humor, and many theories might be offered as partial explanation. But history

admits this suggestion:

"The period between the accession of Jackson and the death of Lincoln is rich in material for

³ Trent, W. F. A History of Am. Lit. p. 316.
⁴ Ibid. p. 316.

humorists due to incongruities between the pretensions of the new democracy to rule the fortunes of the country and the capacity to do so wisely, and between the theories of the Declaration of Independence and the facts of slavery." ⁵

This same writer ventures another explanation when he writes,

"Another reason that American humor should have begun a fairly rapid evolution after 1830 is that humorous creations were first published in newspapers, and the importance of the daily press increased greatly during the epoch of the first railroads and telegraph lines, and of the great political struggle over slavery." ⁶

A cursory study or survey of the chief exponents of this humorous movement will prove both advantageous and interesting. Consequently, a partial list of American humorists follows:

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------|
| 1. Benjamin Franklin, | 1706 - 1790 |
| 2. Washington Irving, | 1779 - 1860 |
| 3. James K. Paulding, | 1779 - 1860 |
| 4. Fitz-Green Halleck, | 1790 - 1867 |
| 5. Seka Smith, | 1792 - 1868 |
| 6. Eliza Leslie, | 1787 - 1858 |
| 7. Robert C. Sands, | 1799 - 1832 |
| 8. Oliver Wendell Holmes, | 1809-1894 |
| 9. George W. Harris, | 1814-69 |

5. Ibid p. 516.

6. Ibid p. 517

10. Benjamin P. Shillaber, 1814-90
11. Johnson P. Hooper, 1815-63
12. John Godfrey Saxe, 1816-87
13. James Russell Lowell, 1819-91
14. Henry Wheeler Shaw (Josh Billings), 1818-85
15. George H. Derky (John Phoenix), 1823-61
16. David R. Locke (Rev. Petroleum Nasky) 1833-88
17. Charles Farrar Browne (Artemus Ward) 1834-67
18. John Hay, 1838-1905
19. Francis Bret Harte, 1839-1902
20. Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain) 1835-1910
21. Edward Eggleston, 1837-1902
22. James Whitcomb Riley, 1849-1916

Lowell and Holmes, the academic humorists, like their predecessors, Benjamin Franklin, and his contemporary, Francis Hopkinson, all followed British models in their style of writing.⁷ Of these British humorists, W. M. Praed and Thomas Hood are the two most popular models which the American humorists followed.⁸ America's indebtedness to English writers is commented upon by Mr. Trent when he says,

7. Trent, William P. p. 519

8. Cambridge History of English Literature, V. 12, p.119.

10. Benjamin P. Shillaber, 1814-30
11. Johnson P. Hooper, 1815-33
12. John Rogers Jones, 1816-37
13. James Russell Lowell, 1819-31
14. Henry Wheeler Shaw (John Sullivan), 1819-33
15. George H. Barry (John Phoebe), 1823-31
16. David H. Locke (Rev. Peterson Barry), 1827-33
17. Charles Farrar Browne (Artemus Ward), 1834-37
18. John Hay, 1835-1902
19. Francis Bret Harte, 1835-1902
20. Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain), 1835-1910
21. Edward Taylor, 1837-1902
22. James Whitcomb Riley, 1843-1916

Lowell and Rolfe, the academic humorists, like their predecessors, Benjamin Franklin, and his contemporaries, Francis Hopkinson, all followed British models in their style of writing.⁷ Of these British humorists, W. B. Fiske and Thomas Hood are the two most popular models which the American humorists followed.⁸ American imitations of English writers is commented upon by Mr. Frost when he says,

7. Fiske, William B. 319.
8. Cambridge History of English Literature, V. 12, p. 119.

"In 1809 Irving's Mr. Knickerbocker's History of New York gave the world its first prolonged opportunity to smile or laugh at the creations of an American's whimsical genius. - - - Irvine was indebted to Goldsmith for the humor of the Sketch Book, and later writings. Other Knickerbocker authors, Paulding, Drake, Halleck, Sands, and the rest, while not entirely un-American in their mild humor, obviously drew upon their reading just as Irvine did, so that it seems fair to say that for forty years after Franklin's death no humor equal in raciness to his made its appearance in American literature."⁹

That John Godfrey Saxe was somewhat indebted to Thomas Hood is evident from Mr. Taft's reference to one of the poet's most popular poems, "But Saxe's literary reputation was not firmly established until in 1848 Proud Miss McBride caught the public ear and won universal popularity for her author. This poem is a Yankee Version of Hood's Golden Legend."¹⁰ Mention of this similarity to Hood is made in an article in The Bookman for June 1916.

"It is chiefly as a poet that Saxe will be known to fame, and more especially, as a humorous poet. He has often been styled the Tom Hood of America, and he resembled Oliver Wendell Holmes in the finish of his verse, but had the advantage over him in his faculty of punning."¹¹

On this same subject, Mr. John S. Hart has said,

"Until his (Saxe) fame was somewhat overshadowed by Artemus Ward, he might have been called

9. Ibid p. 520.

10. Taft, Russell W. - John Godfrey Saxe p. 32.

11. Bookman p. 390.

"In 1868 Irving's Mr. Knickerbocker's History of New York gave the world the first professional opportunity to write or judge of the character of an American's whimsical qualities. - - - Irving was indebted to Goldsmith for the humor of the Knickerbocker and later writers. Other Knickerbocker authors, including Drake, Hilditch, Tuckey, and the rest, while not entirely un-American in their mind and spirit, especially from their reading that of Irving did, so that it seems fair to say that for forty years after Franklin's death no humor equal in richness to his made its appearance in American literature."

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"It is chiefly as a poet that Saxe will be known to fame, and more especially, as a humorous poet. He has often been styled the Tom Hood of America, and he resembled Oliver Wendell Holmes in the finish of his verse, but had the advantage over him in his faculty of punning."

On this same subject, Mr. John E. Hart has said, "Until his (Saxe) fame was somewhat overshadowed by Atterton Ward, he might have been called

9. Ibid. p. 820.
10. Tait, Russell W. - John Godfrey Saxe p. 22.
11. Bookman p. 220.

the most humorous writer of America - - - - Mr. Saxe excels in light, easy verse, and in the unexpected, if not absolutely punning, turns of expression. His more elaborate productions are not so successful. In the general style and effect of certain of his comic pieces he strongly reminds one of Thomas Hood. Saxe, it must be observed, is one of the very thoroughly national poets, in this sense, that his themes and the atmosphere of his verse are almost exclusively American."¹²

That Saxe ranked with Holmes and was equally as clever as Hood seemed fully agreed upon by many critics, as Mr. Justin S. Merrill says, "Saxe was the author of some poems as witty as any ever written by Dr. Holmes, and some of his punning pieces are not excelled even by anything of Tom Hood's."¹³

Brander Matthews, writing in 1896 adds a little different note to the general consensus of opinion, "A poet who wrote society verse of not a little sparkle, although not equal to the best in that kind by Halleck and Holmes."¹⁴ In regard to Saxe's patterning after British models, Mr. Matthews continues,

"His verse is modelled upon Praed's, to whose dazzling brilliance he could not attain; and he borrowed also the pattern of Hood in his more broadly comic lyrics; but he was a little too easy going to achieve the delicate fineness which we have a right to demand in familiar verse - - - His defect is that his verse tends to be fankly laughter-provoking."¹⁵

12. Moulton, Charles Wells, ed. The Library of Literary Criticism of English & American Authors

13. Ibid p. 617.

14. Ibid p. 617.

15. Ibid p. 617.

the most humorous writer of America - - - Mr. Saxe wrote in light, easy verse, and in the manner of a poet, it is not absolutely genuine, but of exceptional quality. His more elaborate productions are not so successful. In the general style and effect of certain of his comic pieces he strongly resembles one of Thomas Hood. Here, it must be observed, is one of the very thorough, if not the best, in this sense, that his poems and the atmosphere of his verse are almost exclusively American.¹³

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"His verse is modelled upon Tennyson's, to whose dazzling brilliance he could not attain; and he borrowed also the pattern of Hood in his more prosaic lyric; but he was a little too early going to imitate the delicate fineness which we have a right to demand in familiar verse - - - His defects is that his verse tends to be fairly ineffectual-voicing."¹⁶

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13. Houston, Charles Wells, ed. The Library of Literary Criticism of English & American Authors
 14. 1914. p. 617.
 15. 1914. p. 617.
 16. 1914. p. 617.

To the serious-thinking student of literature comes the ever recurring query why did this once popular lecturer and poet become so thoroughly eclipsed. Many theories to answer this question might be suggested. One of the most obvious explanations is offered by his grandson.

"He (Saxe) is often as clever in the humorous vein as Dr. Holmes. But he didn't live in the Boston pale, though his works were published by its classic house. So he missed accelerated and imputed fame. After he left Vermont, he settled in Albany. So he was not in the Knickerbocker School. Albeit his first verses appeared in The Knickerbocker Magazine in 1841. He was isolated, without a claque. Mr. Stedman left him out of that exceedingly Catholic American Anthology."16

Mr. Taft offers another very probable reason for his eclipse which is due to so many local allusions in his work. For example one of the stanzas of the poem Ye Pedagogue contains such a one:

"Ah, many a steake hath he devoured,
That, by ye taste and sighte,
Was in disdaine, Twas very plaine,
Of Daye his patent righte."17

Thus it is evident that this reference to "the inventor of 'patent leather', then just coming into vogue, would scarcely be understood by the rising generation."18

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16. Anonymous Pamphlet p.38 (Contributed by Miss Mary Sollace Saxe).
17. Taft, R. W. p.26.
18. Ibid p.27.

To the various students of literature comes the ever recurring query why did this once popular lecturer and poet become so thoroughly eclipsed. The theories to answer this question might be suggested. One of the most obvious explanations is offered by his friends.

"He (Rex) is often as clever in the humorous vein as Dr. Holmes. But he didn't live in the Boston pale, though his works were published by the classic house. So his mind was not so much imprinted. After he left Vermont, he settled in Albany. So he was not in the Knickerbocker school. Alfred his first verses appeared in The Knickerbocker Magazine in 1841. He was isolated, without a class. Mr. Stebbins left the rest of that exceedingly Catholic American anthology.

Mr. Tait offers another very probable reason for his eclipse which is due to so many local allusions in his work. For example one of the stanzas of the poem Poland contains such a line:

"Ah, many a stanza hath he favored,
That by ye taste and sight,
Was in decline, then very plain,
Of days his potent rights."

Thus it is evident that this reference to "the inventor of 'patent leather', then just coming into vogue, would scarcely be understood by the rising generation."

16. Anonymous Pamphlet p. 36 (Contributed by Miss Mary Holmes Rex).
17. Tait, N. W. p. 36.
18. Ibid. p. 37.

The most outstanding reason for John Godfrey Saxe's almost total eclipse, however, may be found in the rise of the Western humorists, Derky, Hay, Browne, Clemens and Bret Harte. This new type of humor which was used by these writers may best be understood by a brief mention of its chief characteristics, as well as of those of the period which furnished them with material.

Mr. Pattee comprehensively and tersely characterizes the early American humorous writers,

"Humor is no new thing in our literature, the first really American book, Knickerbocker's History of New York, was broadly irresistibly humorous, while Holmes and Lowell, and many another of the earlier school, were mirthmakers of a high order. Yet Irving's humor is of the English type. It depends on characterization, on minute description, on sympathetic insight. Holmes brilliant bon mots were more French than American. Lowell, it is true, caught our peculiar Yankee drollery to perfection, yet his Hosea Biglow does not represent the whole American people. While the humor of all these masters is of an imperishable kind, it does not, as a European would say, have the flavor of the American soil. It remained for George H. Derby and Charles F. Browne and their followers to embody in literary form this new autochthonic American humor, which while it might be coarse perhaps at times and redolent of the frontier where it was born, was, nevertheless, something new under the son - - - - The chief ingredients of the representative American humor seem to be irreverence, exaggeration, and a skilful mingling of incongruities."¹⁹

To continue, "During the war decade (Civil War) this distinctive phase of our literature burst everywhere with popularity. It seemed to be a phase of frontier life. It rolled in from the West - it came from the settlement of the great

19. Pattee, Fred Lewis Century Readings in American Literature N. Y. Century, 1932, Ch. XX. p. 677.

The most outstanding reason for John Galsworthy's almost total eclipse, however, may be found in the rise of the Western Hemisphere, Doris, Brown, Clement and that sort. This new type of humor which was used by these writers may best be understood by a brief mention of its chief characteristics, as well as of those of the period which furnished them with material.

Mr. Bates comprehensively and tersely characterizes the early American humorous writers.

"Humor is no new thing in our literature, the first really American book, Knickerbocker's History of New York, was already interestingly humorous, while Knickerbocker's History, and many another of the earlier school, were manifestations of a high order. Yet living's humor is of the English type. It depends on observation, on minute description, on sympathetic feeling. Knickerbocker's History was more French than American. Knickerbocker's History, it is true, caught our peculiar Yankee flavor to perfection, but his humor is not representative of the whole American people. While the humor of all those writers is of an independent kind, it does not, as a European would say, have the flavor of the American soil. It remained for Knickerbocker's History and Knickerbocker's History to embody in literary form this new autochthonous American humor, which while it might be coarse perhaps at times and tedious of the frontier where it was born, was nevertheless, speaking now under the new name, the chief ingredients of the representative American humor were to be irreverence, exaggeration, and a skillful mingling of incongruities."

To continue, "During the war decade (Civil War) this distinctive phase of our literature burst everywhere with popularity. It seemed to be a phase of frontier life. It rolled in from the West - it came from the settlement of the great

mid-land region, from the steamboats of the Mississippi, from the camps of the gold coast, and the bivouacs of the Civil War."²⁰

Longstreet, Harris, and Baldwin had been the pioneer humorists,

"but the real father of the new school was an engineer, George Horatio Derby, 1823-1861, who found relief at times from the perplexities of an exacting profession by writing his John Phoenix papers, in which he embodied the spirit of early California, where for a long time he was stationed. In his Phoenixiana, published in 1855, we find the elements of exaggeration, irreverence, euphemistic statement, understatement, and Yankee aphorism."²¹

Mr. Trent acknowledges Derby's contribution of two volumes of burlesque sketches (The Phoenixiana, 1855), and The Squibob Papers, 1859) describing the Pacific Coast. He says, "Nor should he be denied the credit of having introduced to the world the humor of the Pacific Coast, and having taught his countrymen new tricks of extravagant thought and expression."²²

The second humorist in this new school was Charles Farrar Browne, (1834-67)

"A Maine Yankee, who worked his way into the Middle West, established one of the first of the Newspaper funny columns, and there lectured extensively, at one time reaching the California Coast. London, England, was the last of his lecture stands and it was the complete winning of this critical city that made him universally famous. - - - His 'Artemus Ward' papers are

20. Ibid p.677

21. Ibid p.677

22. Trent, Wm P. A History of American Literature
1903 p. 531.

midland region, from the standpoint of the
Mississippi, from the range of the gold coast,
and the discovery of the Civil War, 1860

Longestest, Harrie, and Delwin had been the

plaster humors.

"But the real father of the new school was an
engineer, George Horatio Derby, 1823-1881, who
found relief at times from the perplexities of an
exacting profession by writing his John Phoenix
papers, in which he embodied the spirit of early
California, where for a long time he was stationed.
In his Phoenix, published in 1855, we find the
elements of exaggeration, irreverence, egotism,
statement, understatement, and Yankee aphorisms."²¹
Mr. Trent acknowledges Derby's contribution of two

volumes of picturesque sketches (The Phoenix, 1855),
and The Pacific Papers, 1855) describing the Pacific
Coast. He says, "Nor should he be denied the credit of
having introduced to the world the name of the Pacific
Coast, and having taught his countrymen new tricks of
extravagant thought and expression."²²

The second humorist in this new school was Charles

Farrer Browne, (1824-87)

"A Maine Yankee, who worked his way into the
Middle West, established one of the first of the
Newspaper funny columns, and there lectured ex-
tensively, at one time reaching the California
Coast. London, England, was the last of his
lecture stands and it was the complete winning
of this critical city that made him universally
famous. - - - His 'Famous Words' papers are

30. 1815 p. 277
31. 1815 p. 277
32. Trent, W. F. A History of American Literature
p. 231

unique. They are redolent of a droll personality. He added cacography to the stock of American humorous devices, and he added also whimsical incongruity, the element of the grotesquely unexpected."²³

History furnishes a vivid portrayal of the background of these humorists: "The discovery of gold in California in 1849, with its attendant excitement and its unpredecented conditions, marks the opening of a picturesque era in American history."²⁴

Miss Jennette, Tandy in Cracker Box, Philosophers further testifies to the picturesqueness of this period.

"The Americans were digging for gold, they were staking out the Great Plains, they were quarrelling and fighting, they were building transcontinental railways, laying down the Atlantic cable, swarming into cities, erecting huge industrial plants, and changing almost overnight from an aggregation of farmers and villagers into a nation of city dwellers and factory workers. And through it all they toiled and speculated and boodled and laughed, - great horse laughs, sardonic grunts, silly giggles, open-mouthed guffaws, sly chuckles.

Of the many men who kept them grinning, C. F. Browne and Henry Wheeler Shaw are best remembered. Both were fun-makers of a rare sort. They cracked jokes, sometimes inane, and sometimes vulgar. More than this, they breathed through their drolleries the exhalations of inborn and original personality. They made along with their witticisms an interpreta-

23. Pattee, p. 677.

24. Patee, p. 738.

tion of human nature as they saw it, and an arraignment of the foibles of man and the imperfections of the social order. And in Artemus Ward and Josh Billings, their assumed characters, they created literary personalities of undeniable virility. Long life to them."²⁵

The Americans' love of aphorisms has been deep and lasting ever since the time of Benjamin Franklin, but the real "American Comic Solomon"²⁶ did not appear until the birth of Henry Wheeler Shaw 1818-85.

"Shaw, or 'Josh Billings', as he called himself, had had a varied career as college student, deck hand on the Ohio River, farmer and auctioneer in Western towns, before he began to write. In 1859, when he was forty, he published an Essay on the Mule and from that time his writings became more and more familiar until his name was well known in every American household, and deservedly so, for behind his grotesque spelling is real wisdom. From his quaint store of aphorisms one may construct the very soul of our Americanism."²⁷

Synonymous with the development of the West, and the birth of the Western Humorists are the names of Francis Bret Harte 1836-1902 and Samuel Langhorne Clemens 1835-1910.

Regarding Bret Harte's place in the literary world William Henry Hudson says,

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25. Tandy, Jennette Reid Crackerbox Philosophers
in American Humor and Satire
N. Y. Columbia University Press, 1925 p. 132.
26. Patee, p. 678.
27. Ibid p. 678

tion of human nature as they saw it, and an assign-
ment of the forces of man and the importance of
the social order. And in American literature, their created
characters, their created characters, they created
literary personalities of undoubted vitality. Long
life to them.

The American's love of aphorisms has been deep and

lasting ever since the time of Benjamin Franklin, but

the real "American Basic Aphorism" did not appear until

the birth of Henry Wheeler Shaw 1816-82.

"Shaw, or 'John William', as he called himself,
had had a varied career as college student, teacher,
and on the Ohio River, farmer and schoolmaster in
Western towns, before he began to write. In 1832,
when he was forty, he published an Essay on the
Hero and the Heroine which his wife became more and
more familiar with his name was well known in
every American household, and especially so, for he
had his prototype dwelling in real life. From
his quaint store of aphorisms one may construct the
very soul of our Americanism."

Synchronism with the development of the West, and

the birth of the Western Hemisphere are the names of

Francis Paul Harris 1836-1902 and Samuel Langhorne

Clemens 1823-1910.

Regarding Paul Harris's place in the literary world

William Henry Hudson says,

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22. Emily, Tennessee and Crackerbox Philosophers
in American Humor and Satire
W. Y. Columbia University Press, 1922. p. 122.
23. Harris, p. 278.
24. Harris, p. 278.

"In estimating Mr. Harte's work, allowance has of course to be made for the fact that it was his rare good fortune to break new ground, and to become the first literary interpreter of a life which with its primitive breadth and freedom, its unconventionality and picturesqueness, its striking contrasts of circumstance and character, offered singular opportunities to the novelist. - - - -

Among the qualities which perhaps most constantly impress the critical reader of his total work are his splendid dramatic instinct, his keen insight into character, his broad sympathy, and his subtle and pervasive humor."²⁸

This "new ground" which Mr. Hudson aptly terms Harte's field of endeavor is fittingly and realistically described by Mr. Pattee, who says,

"The mad rush of all nationalities across the pathless plains, around the southern cape, across the isthmus; the headlong scramble of the mines; the mining towns that rose as if by magic in every gulch; the lawless miners who appealed to no law save their revolvers - men who today might be fabulously rich, 'treating' the town to champagne in buckets, tomorrow 'busted', and at work with spade and cradle; the rivalry and excitement when a stroke of the pick might make a man a millionaire or the turn of a card reduce him to poverty; the new scenery, almost tropical in its flora, and unprecedented in its proportions, with mammoth plants and trees, great canons, alkaline plains, and lofty sierras--all this was highly romantic and bound sooner or later to have its laureate, and they found it in Harte."²⁹

No sketch of frontier life would be adequate without mention of John Hay (1838-1905), and Edward Eggleston

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28. Warner, Charles Dudley Library of the World's
Best Literature - N. Y. Hill & Co. 1902, V. 17 p.6986.
29. Pattee p. 738.

"In estimating Mr. Hart's work, allowance has
of course to be made for the fact that it was his
first good fortune to break new ground, and to become
the first literary investigator of a life which with
its primitive breadth and freedom, its unobscured
silly and picturesque, its striking contrasts
of circumstance and character, offered singular
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Among the qualities which perhaps most constantly
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his splendid dramatic feeling, his keen insight
into character, his broad sympathy, and his subtle
and persuasive humor."

This "new ground" which Mr. Hudson aptly terms Hart's

field of endeavor is fittingly and realistically described

by Mr. Fiske, who says:

"The real truth of all romanticism across the
pathless plains, around the southern cape, across the
barren, the heathen, the world of the mine; the
plain towns that rise as if by magic in every valley;
the lawless miners who appeared to no law save their
revolvers - men who today might be fabulously rich,
'treating' the town to champagne in bottles, tomorrow
'busted', and at work with spade and pickaxe; the
rivalry and excitement when a stroke of the pick
might make a man a millionaire or the loss of a nail
reduce him to poverty; the new scenery, almost tropi-
cal in its flora, and unprecedented in its propor-
tions, with mammoth plants and trees, great canons,
alkaline plains, and lofty sierras--all this was
highly romantic and bound sooner or later to have
its literature, and they found it in Hart."

No sketch of frontier life would be adequate with-

out mention of John Hay (1858-1905), and Edward Taylor

32. Warner, Charles Dudley, Library of the World's
Best Literature - N. Y. Hill & Co., 1902, v. 17 p. 2380.
32. Fiske, p. 728.

(1837-1902), The latter was "the first to introduce prominently the middle border states into literature."³⁰ Eggleston's story The Hoosier Schoolmaster, the scene laid in the crude regions of early Indiana, was the first of his stories to attract attention. Mr. Pattee says,

"Its humor, its strange types, and its undoubted moral atmosphere, gave it a circle of readers wider even than that which had greeted the first stories of Harte. - - - Undoubtedly there is much of crudeness in the early work, but parts of it are exceedingly valuable. The End of the World and The Circuit Rider are realistic studies, by one to the manner born, of an era in our national life that has vanished forever." ³¹

Hay's contribution to "wild-western " literature consisted of a "wild lawless ballad form."³² His ballads were later collected as Pike County Ballads, and described "the homely western frontier life." The significance of this collection of poems lies in the fact that it, "all unconsciously set in motion that school of poetical local colorists, and dialect versifiers of whom James Whitcomb Riley is perhaps the typical figure. - - -

"His was one of those rare germinal minds that appear now and then to break into new regions and to scatter seed from which others are to reap the harvest."³³

30. Pattee, p. 753.
 31. Ibid p. 653.
 32. Ibid p. 759
 33. Ibid p. 759

(1887-1903). The latter was the first to introduce pro-
 cessing the middle border states into literature.
 Edgar Allan Poe's story The Hound of the Baskinville, the scene
 laid in the wide regions of early Indiana, was the first
 of his stories to attract attention. Mr. Paine says,

"The manner, the strange types, and the un-
 doubted moral atmosphere, gave it a circle of
 readers wider than that which had greeted the
 first stories of Hawthorne. - - - Undoubtedly there is
 much of originality in the early work, but parts of
 it are exceedingly valuable. The Hound of the Baskinville
 and The Hound of the Baskinville are realistic studies,
 one in the manner born, of an era in our national
 life that has vanished forever." 31

Hay's contribution to "wild-western" literature
 consisted of a "wild lawless outlaw form." 32 His
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 and described "the homely western frontier life." The
 significance of this collection of poems lies in the
 fact that it, "fell unconsciously and in motion that
 school of poetical local colorists, and distant verbal-
 lists of whom James Whitcomb Riley is perhaps the
 typical figure. - - -"

"This was one of those rare germinal minds that
 appear now and then to break into new regions and to
 scatter seed from which others are to reap the harvest." 33

30. Paine	p. 753
31. 1915	p. 853
32. 1915	p. 753
33. 1914	p. 753

In commenting on the function of the newspaper as a medium for literature, much credit must be assigned to James Whitcomb Riley, (1849-1916), whose poetical work as a humorist, began in verse contributions to all the papers around his home (Greenfield, Indiana). At first many of these poems were issued under pseudonyms; then in 1883 he published at his own expense a small collection entitled The Old Swimmin' Hole and 'Leven More Poems.³⁴

Riley is the foremost American representative of the movement called the democratization of poetry. His poetry confined itself to humble life - often rural life - and still more humble characters. He used dialect;

"And he used with liberal hand sentiment, and not over-refined humor, and all those other well known devices that enable the public reader to win popular audiences. His poems are thoroughly American and thoroughly democratic, and his influence on the period has been considerable. Often he strikes the note of true pathos, especially in his lyrics of childhood, and now and then there are chords that raise him from the ranks of the mere entertainers into the select company of the true poets."³⁵

The picturesqueness of this new frontier life has been ably described by that master of humorists, Mark Twain. After the publication of Roughing It, his most

34. Ibid p. 966.

35. Ibid p. 966.

In commenting on the function of the newspaper as a medium for literature, much credit must be assigned to James Whitcomb Riley, (1865-1916), whose practical work as a journalist, began in various contributions to all the papers around his home (Greensburg, Indiana). At first many of these poems were issued under pseudonyms; then in 1883 he published at his own expense a small collection entitled The Old Kentucky Home and Other Verse.²⁴

Riley is the foremost American representative of the movement called the democratization of poetry. His poetry confined itself to humble life - often rural life - and still more humble characters. He used dialect;

"and he used with liberal hand sentiment, and not over-refined humor, and all these other well known devices that enable the public reader to win popular audiences. His poems are thoroughly American and thoroughly democratic, and his influence on the period has been considerable. Often he strikes the note of true pathos, especially in his lyrics of childhood, and now and then there are choruses that raise him from the ranks of the mere entertainer into the select company of the true poets."²⁵

The picturesque of this new frontier life has

been fully described by that master of humorists, Mark Twain. After the publication of Roughing It, his most

34. 1914	p. 288.
35. 1914	p. 288.

amusing account of the frontier life, one reads "His pen became immediately in great demand, and innumerable sketches flowed from it, many of them recklessly exaggerated for the effect he wished to produce, always laughter-provoking, and nearly always having a wholesome element of satire of some sham or pretense or folly."³⁶

There is a striking similarity between the lives of Mark Twain, and Saxe, for both writers were in great demand as lecturers, and as after dinner speakers. Referring to Mark Twain, Mr. Hudson writes, "As a lecturer, a teller of stories, and delineator of character he had scarcely a rival in his ability to draw and entertain vast audiences."³⁷

Considering the similarity of the two men's lives, one will again ask why was Saxe eclipsed, while this contemporary and others live on in dazzling splendor. One preeminent reason is offered:

"Mr. Clemens humor has the stamp of universality which is the one indispensable thing in all enduring literary productions, and his books have been translated and very widely diffused and read in German, French and other languages. This is a prophecy of his lasting place in the world of letters."³⁸

36. Warner, Charles Dudley ed. Library of the World's Best Literature, N. Y. Hill & Co. 1902. V. 7 p. 3788.

37. Ibid p. 3788.

38. Ibid p. 3789.

Like Mark Twain, Artemus Ward "aimed at the presentation of a national, not a local type."³⁹ In contrast to these writers, Saxe's poems contained too many local allusions, which would not be readily understood by the universal reader. In short, his poetry lacked "the stamp of universality." There~~re~~, again, many of Saxe's poems were satires on popular day ~~foibles~~ fables; and satire, regardless how clever or brilliant, is doomed to perish with the period or circumstance which calls it forth. Then mention must be made of the fact that the Western humorists portrayed the teeming activities of the every day life of the every day pioneer and would therefore appeal to a vastly larger audience; whereas Saxe's poems were filled with classical allusions, and literary references; thus his audience would be greatly restricted. Then, too, Saxe had lived the conventional life of a lawyer, editor and poet; whereas the western writers, like Mark Twain and Bret Harte, had seen life in the mining camps, - "in the rough". Therefore, the writings of each would reflect the surrounds of the writer - which meant that Saxe's poems would be more

39. Tandy, Jennette Reid p. 136.

refined, more conventional as regards theme and form,
while Harte's and Twains would be more filled with
flesh and blood.

Before any classification and collation of the
many devices which have been made, attention will
be directed to the range of the author's work. The
Brimley Edition of The Complete Works of John Milton
1841 (published by Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1841),
table of contents, classifies the poems under the
following titles:

- 1) Poems; 2) Love Poems; 3) Religious Poems;
- 4) Satire; 5) Satire and Legends of Holy Countries;
- 6) Satire; 7) Sonnets from Occasional Poems; 8)
- Translations and Paraphrases; 9) Translations; 10) Epigrams;
- 11) Epigrams; 12) Epigrams from the Latin of Virgil.

Instead of following the above conventional classification
of these poems, this thesis will group the
poems under the following topics:

- 1) Vocational
 - a) Religion
 - b) Law
 - c) Journalism
- 2) Occasional
- 3) Social

refined, more conventional as regards theme and form,
 while Bart's and Twain would be more filled with
 flesh and blood.

CHAPTER IV

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF SAXE'S HUMOR AND ITS RANGE

Before any classification and criticism of the comedy devices which Saxe used are made, attention will be centered on the range of the author's work. The Household Edition of The Poetical Works of John Godfrey Saxe, (published by Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston C. 1892,) table of contents, classifies the poems under the following titles:

- 1) Poems; 2) Love Poems; 3) Leisure Day Rhymes;
- 4) Fairy Tales; 6) Fables and Legends of Many Countries;
- 7) Satires; 8) Excerpts from Occasional Poems; 9)
- Translations and Paraphrases; 10) Travesties; 11) Sonnets;
- 12) Epigrams; 13) Epigrams from the Latin of Martial.

Instead of following the above conventional classification of Saxe's poems, this thesis will discuss the poet's range under the following topics:

- 1) Vocational

- a) Politics

- b) Law

- c) Journalism

- 2) Occasional

- 3) Social

CHAPTER IV

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF SAKA'S WORK AND ITS RANGE

Before any classification and criticism of the country devices which Saka used are made, attention will be centered on the range of the author's work. The Harvard Edition of The Poetical Works of John Keats, published by Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1903, table of contents, classifies the poems under the following titles:

- 1) Poems; 2) Love Poems; 3) Letters and Essays;
 - 4) Early Poems; 5) Poems and Legends of Mary, Queen of Scots;
 - 6) Ballads; 7) Excerpts from Occasional Poems; 8) Translations and Paraphrases; 9) Tragedies; 10) Sonnets;
 - 11) Epigrams; 12) Epigrams from the Latin of Martial.
- Instead of following the above conventional classification of Saka's poems, this thesis will discuss the poet's range under the following topics:

- 1) Vocational
 - a) Politics
 - b) Law
 - c) Journalism
- 2) Occasional
- 3) Social

- 4) Personal
- 5) Religious
- 6) Democracy
- 7) Local
- 8) Satires

Most people might agree that these are the representative phases of Saxe's life, and, as such, have contributed the subject matter or background for a very great majority of the poet's work. Recalling the biographical facts of Saxe's life that he was attorney-general of the State, then deputy-collector of customs, and in 1859 and 1860 the unsuccessful Democratic candidate for governor, one find it most natural that politics should furnish the poet with a lively topic for his versifying.

An incident of the campaign for governor furnished the following well-known epigram, A Candid Candidate.

"When John was contending (though sure to be beat)
In the annual race for the governor's seat,
And a crusty old fellow remarked to his face,
He was clearly too young for so lofty a place,
'Perhaps so,' said John, 'but consider a minute
The objection will cease by the time I am in it'."¹

The humor of this characteristic epigram only can be fully appreciated when it is recalled that Saxe realized

1. Saxe, J. G. The Poetical Works of --- p. 251.

- 4) Personal
- 5) Religious
- 6) Democratic
- 7) Local
- 8) National

Most people might agree that these are the representative phases of Saxe's life, and, as such, have constituted the subject matter of his work. Handling the great majority of the poet's work. Handling the biographical facts of Saxe's life that he was attorney-general of the state, then deputy-collector of customs, and in 1888 and 1890 the unsuccessful Democratic candidate for Governor, one finds it most natural that politics should furnish the poet with a lively topic for his versifying.

An incident of the campaign for Governor furnished the following well-known epigram. A Gambit Epithet.

"When John was contending (though sure to be beat)
In the honest race for the Governor's seat,
And a certain old fellow resorted to his face,
He was clearly too young for so lofty a place,
'Perchance so,' said John, 'but consider a minute
The objection will cease by the time I am in it.'"

The humor of this characteristic epigram only can be fully appreciated when it is recalled that Saxe realized

and regarded the nomination as purely complimentary, for there were not enough Democrats in the entire state to elect any executive to office.

Saxe was all his life a zealous Democrat, and soon after he became a lawyer he began to use his pen for the benefit of his political party. "During the Clay Campaign of 1844 he contributed various campaign songs and squibs to The St. Albans Republican."² One of the epigrams, characteristic of this period, runs as follows:

"The image of the Syrian Monarch's dream
A type of modern whiggery would seem -
A little gold, some iron and much brass
Composed in part the ill compounded mass
But yet so strong, it might have stood today
Had not the pedestal been made of Clay."³

Of the three vocational themes, politics, law, and journalism, it is apparent that law furnished a greater number of his most popular poems, ~~al~~beit Saxe never enjoyed this profession. And even though he practiced law in St. Albans and Burlington, Vermont until as late as 1851, he found the profession irksome, and expressed an intention of leaving the practice as soon as he could find a more congenial way of earning a living. One reason for his dislike of the law may be inferred from Mr. Taft's description of this period of Saxe's life.

2. Taft, R. W. p. 22.

and received the nomination as purely complimentary,
for there were not enough Democrats in the entire
state to elect any executive to office.
Gore was all his life a restless Democrat, and soon
after he became a lawyer he began to use his pen for the
benefit of his political party. "During the City Con-
vention of 1844 he contributed various campaign songs and
epithets to the St. Albans Advertiser." One of the anti-
Federalist characteristics of this period, runs as follows:

"The image of the British monarch's crown
A type of modern whiteness would seem -
A little gold, some iron and much brass
Composed in part the ill compounded mass
But yet as armor, it might have stood today
Had not the Federal been made of clay."

Of the three vocational themes, politics, law, and
journalism, it is apparent that law furnished a greater
number of his most popular poems, albeit Gore never en-
joyed this profession. And even though he practiced law
in St. Albans and Burlington, Vermont until as late as
1881, he found the profession tiresome, and expressed an
intention of leaving the practice as soon as he could find
a more congenial way of earning a living. One reason for
his dislike of the law may be inferred from Mr. Tate's
description of this period of Gore's life.

"He was not a success as a lawyer; the brilliancy of his intellect forbade his relishing the dry profundity of the abstract science; and his practice which was never large was cared for by ex-lieutenant, governor Levi Underwood. His (Saxe) only appearance before the Supreme Court was in State v. Woodward - 23 Vt. 92 - argued for the State by J. G. Saxe, State's attorney, with whom was L. Underwood. In this he seems to have had the strong end of the argument for the decision favored the respondent Woodward."⁴

Saxe's uncongenial attitude towards the practice of law is readily sensed in the ^{poem} case in which he offers advice to a young friend who thinks he should like to become a lawyer. Not only his distaste for the law, but his skill in punning are so unusual that the entire poem follows:

Advice to a Young Friend, who
Thinks He Should like to Be a Lawyer

"No, no my boy! let others sweat
And wrangle in the courts;
Their pleas are most unpleasing things;
You cannot trust Reports!

Although the law of literature
May your attention draw,
I'm very sure you wouldn't like
The Literature of Law!

Justinian's Novels don't compare
With those of Walter Scott;
They've very little sentiment,
And deuce a bit of plot!

When Coke on Littleton came down,
He served him right; but who
Would say it were a civil thing
To set them both on you?

4. Ibid p.35.

"He was not a success as a lawyer; the brilliancy of his intellect forbade his relying the dry versatility of the abstract sciences; and his practice which was never large was cared for by his friend, Governor Levi Underwood. His (Saxe) only appearance before the Supreme Court was in State v. Woodward - 23 Vt. 23 - argued for the State by J. D. Saxe, Saxe's attorney, with whom was J. Underwood. In this he seems to have had the strong end of the argument for the decision favor- ed the respondent Woodward."

Saxe's unpopularity attests towards the practice of law is really common in the case in which he offers advice to a young friend who thinks he should like to become a lawyer. Not only his estimate for the law, but his skill in punning are so unusual that the entire poem follows:

Advice to a Young Friend, who

Thinks He Should Like to Be a Lawyer

"No, no my boy! let others sweat
And wrangle in the courts;
Their pleas are most unpleasing things;
You cannot trust honor!"

Although the law of literature
May your attention draw,
I'm very sure you wouldn't like
The literature of law!

Lawyer's Novel's don't compare
With those of Walter Scott;
They're very little comment,
And hence a bit of plot!

When God an edition came down,
He served him right; but who
Would say it were a civil thing
To set them both on foot?

In Blackstone there is much, I own,
 Well worthy of regard;
 But then, my boy, like other stone,
 You'll find him precious hard!

Sir William Jones is very well,
 As every scholar knows;
 But read, my lad, his poetry,
 And never mind his prose.

Though Angell tempt you, heed him
 not;
 For Satan, to his shame,
 Full oft, to further wicked ends,
 Employs a seraph's name!

Though Aiken may be very wise,
 Pray what is that to you?
 His reader will be apt to find
 That he is achin' too!

There's Story now, the lawyers say,
 Is very fine indeed;
 I only know he's not the kind
 Young fellows like to read!

And as for Cruise, though much ad-
 mired,
 You'd better let him be,
 And use, instead, the milder sort
 That people take at sea!

No, no, my boy! let others sweat
 And wrangle in the courts;
 There's nothing pleasing in a Plea;
 You cannot trust Reports!

Although the law of literature
 May your attention draw,
 I'M very sure you wouldn't like
 The Literature of Law!"⁵

Saxe, humorously at least, recognized his ineffi-
 ciency as a lawyer, for he once jocosely remarked on the

5. Saxe, J. G. The Poetical Works of - p. 78.

In Elisabeth there is much, I own,
Well worthy of regard;
But then, my boy, like other names,
You'll find him prosaic hard!

Mr. William Waller is very well,
As every school-boy knows;
But read, my lad, his verses,
And never mind his prose.

Through Angels tempt you, lead him
out;
For Eden, in his shame,
Fell off, to ladder shame ends,
Enjoys a seraph's name!

Though Alfred may be very wise,
Treat what is said to you;
His reader will be not so kind
That he is aching and!

There's Stacy now, the lawyer boy,
Is very fine indeed;
I only know he's not the kind
Young fellows like to read!

And as for Charles, though much ad-
mired,
You'd better let him be,
And see, instead, the other sort
That people take as best!

No, no, my boy! let others sweat
And struggle in the courts;
There's nothing pleasing in a fight;
You cannot trust deceit!

Although the law of literature
May your attention draw,
I'd very soon you would be free
The literature of law!

Says, humbly at least, recognised his intellect
clearly as a lawyer, for he once humbly remarked on the

fact that out of three divorces which he secured, "two couples had been remarried and gone to living together again."⁶

On one occasion Saxe was present in the court at a tedious trial between two men, Weed and Beach. The lawsuit involved some water rights in the town of Jericho. Even while he sat listening to the tiresome suit, his sense of humor was present as well as his facility to versify, for he wrote:

"My wonder is really boundless,
That among the queer cases we try,
A land case should often be groundless,
And a water case always be dry."⁷

Some of the best-known poems which were based on Saxe's law practice are:

The Briefless Barrister

Ode to the Legislature

The Blarney Stone

The Caliph and the Cripple

It is a well known fact that the law gave birth to some of the poet's cleverest verses, and of these undoubtedly The Briefless Barrister, a ballad, which humorously narrates the sad experience of a lawyer who had not a single case, is the most familiar. The popularity of this poem is vouched for by Mr. Taft.

6. Taft, R. W. p.36.
7. Ibid p. 36.

fact that out of three attorneys which he recruited, "and
couple had been recruited and come to living together
again."
On one occasion there was present in the court at a
session trial between the men, Wood and Beach. The law-
suit involved some water rights in the town of Laramie.
Over which he was listening to the witnesses and his
sense of humor was present as well as his facility to
versify, for he wrote:

"My wonder is really boundless,
That among the great cases to try,
A land case should offer to prosecute,
And a water case always be dry."

Some of the best-known poems which were based on

Beach's law practice are:

- The Waterless Harvester
- Oil in the Land
- The Water Right
- The Right and the Wrong

It is a well known fact that the law gave birth to
some of the poet's cleverest verses, and of these we
doubtless The Waterless Harvester, a ballad, which
dramatically narrates the sad experience of a lawyer who
had not a single case, is the most familiar. The popu-
larity of this poem is vouched for by Mr. Telf.

"The Briefless Barrister, published in The Knickerbocker for September, 1844, travelled fugitively through the papers of America and took a new lease of life after having been copied into Punch."⁸ So filled with clever puns, and so characteristic of Saxe's ready wit, the poem is given in its entirety.

The Briefless Barrister

"An Attorney was taking a turn,
In shabby habiliments drest;
His coat it was shockingly worn,
And the rust had invested his vest.

His breeches had suffered a breach,
His linen and worsted were worse;
He had scarce a whole crown in his
hat,
And not half a crown in his purse.

And thus as he wandered along,
A cheerless and comfortless elf,
He sought for relief in a song,
Or complainingly talked to himself:-

"Unfortunate man that I am!
I've never a client but grief:
The case is, I've no case at all,
And in brief, I've ne'er had a brief!

"I've waited and waited in vain,
Expecting an 'opening' to find,
Where an honest young lawyer might
gain
Some reward for toil of his mind.

"'Tis not that I'm wanting in law,
Or lack an intelligent face,
That others have cases to plead,
While I have to plead for a case.

"The English Gentleman," published in the Englishman
for September, 1844, travelled rapidly through the
papers of America and took a new lease of life after hav-
ing been copied into French. It was filled with clever puns,
and no characteristic of Gaskell's ready wit was given in its entirety.

The English Gentleman

"An attorney was taking a turn
In shabby habitude's dress;
His coat it was shockingly worn,
And the dust had invaded his vest."

His breeches had suffered a breach,
His linen and worsted were worn;
He had scarce a whole crown in his
pocket,
And not half a crown in his purse.

And thus as he wandered along,
A specter and comfortless sight,
He sought for relief in a song,
Of complaintly talked to him-
self:-

"Unfortunate was that I am!
I've never a client but Grief;
The case for, I've no case at all,
And in brief, I've never had a trial!"

"I've waited and waited in vain,
Expecting an 'opinion' to find,
There are honest young lawyers might
gain
Some reward for toil at his mind."

"This not that I'm wanting in law,
Or lack an intelligent face,
That others have cause to praise,
While I have to plead for a case."

'O, how can a modest young man
 E'er hope for the smallest progres-
 sion,-
 The profession's already so full
 Of lawyers so full of profession!"

While thus he was strolling around,
 His eye accidentally fell
 On a very deep hole in the ground
 And he signed to himself, "It is
 well!"

To curb his emotions, he sat
 On the curbstone the space of a min-
 ute,
 Then cried, 'Here's an opening at
 last!'
 And in less than jiffy was in it!

Next morning twelve citizens came
 ('Twas the coroner bade them at-
 tend),
 To the end that it might be determined
 How the man had determined his end!

'The man was a lawyer, I hear,'
 Quote the foreman who sat on the
 corse.
 (A lawyer? Alas!' said another,
 'Undoubtedly died of remorse!')

A third said, 'He knew the deceased,
 An attorney well versed in the laws,
 And as to the cause of his death,
 'Twas no doubt for the want of a
 cause.'

The jury decided at length,
 After solemnly weighing the matter,
 That the lawyer was drowned, because
 He could not keep his head above wa-
 ter!⁹

"Now, how can a modest young man
 expect to make for the wealthiest progress-
 also -
 The professor's already as this
 of lawyers as full of professional
 While this he was stating abroad,
 His eye suddenly fell
 On a very large hole in the ground
 And he picked it himself. 'It is
 well!'

We caught his attention, he said
 On the outside and inside of a min-
 ute,
 Then cried, 'Here's an opening at
 last!
 And in fact there fifty was it!

Next morning twelve citizens came
 ('There the corner had been at-
 tacked),
 To the end that it might be determined
 How the man had determined his end!

'The man was a lawyer, I hear,
 Quoted the testimony who sat on the
 case.
 'A lawyer? Alas! said another,
 'Undoubtedly died of nervousness!'

A third said, 'We know the deceased,
 An attorney well known in the law,
 And as to the cause of his death,
 'There he looks for the rest of a
 course.'

The jury decided at length,
 After solemnly weighing the matter,
 That the lawyer was crowded, because
 He could not keep his head above wa-
 ter!

Saxe's Ode to the Legislature, written on the occasion of "the expiration of the Hundred Days,"¹⁰ might in many respects aptly describe the extra session of the recent legislature at Frankfort and the sales tax issue. His brilliant satire is evident throughout the poem. In part the ode follows:

"O Wise Assembly! and O wiser senate!
 I much rejoice to pent it, -
 The Hundred Days in which you lived in clover
 Are gone and over:

Gone are the Legislators, great and small;
 Clerks, Ushers, Porters, Messengers, and all
 The crowd of country cousins in the hall:
 Gone are the vultures, large and little;
 Gone are the venders of cold victreal.
 Gone are the ladies, short and tall,
 The virtuous and the vicious,
 The meritorious and the meretricious,
 -----Gone is the patient, patriotic 'Lobby';
 Some, who have bagged their game
 Laden with wealth - and shame,
 And others, leading home their lame
 And ill-conditioned hobby,
 A little leaner than it came;

 The burning satire continues:

"They say, O Legislature; in despite
 Of all adverse appearances, you might
 Have been much weaker,
 (How? I have asked, - but all in vain;
 Nor could, or would, explain:)

 Perhaps, O Legislature; since your pay is
 rather small
 (I mean, of course, the regular per diem
 And not the price of votes when brokers buy 'em)
 You saw the Hundredth day
 With pleasure, after all.

10. Ibid p. 103.

And thus, with greater cause,
 Would we respect the Laws
 (Which should be revered to be obeyed),
 It isn't best to see them made."¹¹

In the poem The Blarney Stone, Saxe continues his sharp satire of the "flippant tourist," the "shallow dandy", "the fine lady,-ready to defame, An absent beauty, with as sweet a grace," the "false pastor," and the lawyer to whom he refers in the stanza beginning:

"When sleek attorneys, whose seductive tongues,
 Smooth with the unction of a golden fee,
 'Breathe forth huge falsehoods from
 capacious lungs,'
 (The words are Juvenal's), 't is plain to see
 A lawyer's genius isn't all his own;
 The specious rogue has kiss the Blarney Stone!"¹²

It will be recalled that Saxe renounced the practice of law in 1851, and began his career as a journalist by buying and editing the Vermont Sentinel, which was a democratic weekly, then published in Burlington, Vermont.¹³ He followed this career until 1856, and greatly enjoyed this editorial work; though strangely enough, he "did not try to make the Sentinel a power in politics or literature."¹⁴

11. Ibid p. 103-104 .

12. Ibid p. 65.

13. Taft, R. W. p. 38.

14. Ibid p. 43.

And then, with greater power,
 Would we respect the law
 (Which should be revered in its own right),
 It isn't best to see them made.

In the poem The Highway Sign, some confusion has

arisen as to the "right sign", the "wrong
 sign", the "right sign", the "wrong
 sign", which is meant to be, the "right sign", and
 the sign to which he refers in the stanza beginning:

"When of late I have seen, where
 Goodly is the sign of a golden age,
 'Right sign' has been seen from
 a signpost in the
 (The words are 'right sign', it is clear to see
 A signpost's sign is all his own;
 The signpost sign has been the 'right sign'.

It will be recalled that some confusion has arisen

of late in 1931, and began his career as a journalist by
 writing and editing the Western Mail, which was a
 democratic weekly, then published in Exeter, Devon.
 He followed this career until 1896, and greatly enjoyed
 this editorial work; though strangely enough, he "did not
 try to make the Western a power in politics or literature."

11. 1916	P. 105-106
12. 1916	P. 106
13. 1916	P. 107
14. 1916	P. 108

That he believed in the power of the newspaper as a force for good or ill in the community is attested to by such lines as:

"In the close precincts of a dusty room
That owes few losses to the lazy broom,
There sits the man; you do not know his name,
Brown, Jones, or Johnson - it is all the same,
Scribbling away at what perchance may seem
And idler's musing, or a dreamer's dream;
His pen, runs rambling, like a straying steed;
The 'We' he writes seems very 'Wee' indeed;
But watch the change; behold the wondrous power
Wrought by the press in one eventful hour;
Tonight, 'tis harmless as a maidens rhymes;
Tomorrow, thunder in the London Times!
The ministry dissolves that held for years;
Her Grace, the Duchess, is dissolved in tears;
The Rothchilds quail; the church, the army quakes,
The very Kingdom to the center shakes;
The Corn Laws fall, the price of bread comes down-
Thanks to the 'we' of Johnson, Jones, or Brown!"¹⁵

Another incident during his editorial career is illustrative of the poet's ready wit. The following skit was suggested by a communication from an irate subscriber of the Sentinel whose political views differed from those of Saxe.

"A free soil patron of the Sentinel
Politely bids us send the thing to hell;
A timely hint. 'Tis proper we confess,
With change of residence to change the address
It shall be sent, if Charon's mail will let it."¹⁶

Although politics and the law both furnished Saxe with much material for his poems, yet many more were written to

15. Ibid p. 44.

16. Ibid p. 44.

That he believed in the power of the newspaper as a force
for good or ill in the community is attested by such

lines as:

"In the close proximity of a busy town
that every day brings to the busy crowd,
There sits the man; you do not know his name,
But you know his power - it is all the same.
Deriving away at what perchance may seem
And little's making, or a dreamer's dream;
His pen, when rambling, like a straying steed;
The 'What' he writes seems very 'What', indeed;
But watch the change; behold the wonderful power
Wrought by the pen in one eventful hour;
Tonight, 'tis heralded as a noble triumph;
Tomorrow, changed in the Boston Times!
The ministry themselves that held for years;
Her Grace, the Duchess, is dissolved in tears;
The Rothschilds smile; the Church, the army, crown,
The very Kingdon to the center shake;
The Corn Law fall, the price of bread comes down;
Thanks to the 'What' of Johnson, Tass, or Stewart!"

Another incident during his editorial career is this-

native of the poet's ready wit. The following story was
suggested by a communication from an Irish subscriber of
the Freeman whose political views differed from those of

Sax.

"A true soul patron of the Freeman
Politely bids us send the thing to him:
A timely hint, 'tis proper we confess,
With change of residence to change the address is
It shall be sent, if Chas. G. will let it."

Although politics and the law both furnished Sax with

much material for his pen, yet many more were written to

18. 1815
18. 1815

commemorate special incidents in the poet's life, or for special occasions. Little Jerry the Miller is one of the poet's best known ballads; and is a pleasant reminiscence of the poet's childhood, for the description of both the mill and the miller are both drawn from real people. The poem follows:

Little Jerry the Miller

"Beneath the hill you may see the mill
 Of wasting wood and crumbling
 stone;
 The wheel is dripping and clattering
 still,
 But Jerry, the miller, is dead and
 gone.

Year after year, early and late,
 Alike in summer and winter weather,
 He pecked the stone and calked the
 gate,
 And mill and miller grew old together.

'Little Jerry!' - 'twas all the same,-
 They loved him well who called him
 so;
 And whether he'd ever another name,
 Nobody ever seemed to know.

'Twas, 'Little Jerry, come grind my
 rye';
 And, 'Little Jerry, come grind my
 wheat';
 And 'Little Jerry' was still the cry,
 From matron bold and maiden sweet.

'Twas 'Little Jerry' on every tongue,
 And so the simple truth was told;
 For Jerry was little when he was young,
 And Jerry was little when he was old.

But what in size he chanced to lack
 That Jerry made up in being strong;
 I've seen a sack upon his back
 As thick as the miller, and quite as
 long.

Always busy, and always merry,
 Always doing his very best,
 A notable wag was Little Jerry,
 Who uttered well his standing jest.

How Jerry lived is known to fame,
 But how he died there's none may
 know;
 One autumn day the rumor came,
 'The brook and Jerry are very low.'

And then 't was whispered, mournfully,
 The leech had come, and he was
 dead;
 And all the neighbors flocked to see;
 'Poor little Jerry!' was all they said.

They laid him in his earthy bed,-
 His miller's coat his only shroud;
 'Dust to dust,' the parson said,
 And all the people wept aloud.

For he had shunned the deadly sin,
 And not a grain of over-toll
 Had everdropped into his bin,
 To weigh upon his parting soul.

Beneath the hill there stands the mill,
 Of wasting wood and crumbling stone;
 The wheel is dripping and clattering
 still,
 But Jerry, the miller, is dead and
 gone.¹⁷

Acquiring a college education was a hazardous under-
 taking in Saxe's day, and frequently meant an economic
 struggle. That Saxe knew the literal meaning of the old
 saying, "Plain living and high thinking" may be judged by

17. Saxe, J. G. Complete poems p. 21.

some lines, reminiscent of under-graduate life, which are found in Carmen Laetum:

"Ah! well I remember the halcyon years,
 Too earnest for laughter, too pleasant for tears,
 When life was a boon in yon classical court
 Though lessons were long, and though
 commons were short!
 Ah! well I remember these excellent men,
 Professors and tutors, who reigned o'er us then;
 Who guided our feet over Science's bogs,
 And led us quite safe through Philosophy's fogs,
 Ah! well I remember the President's * face
 As he sat at the lecture with dignified grace,
 And neatly unfolded the mystical themes
 Of various deep metaphysical schemes,-
 How he brightened the path of his studious flock,
 As he gave them a key to that wonderful Locke;
 How he taught us to feel it was fatal indeed
 With too much reliance to lean upon Reid;
 That Stewart was sounder, but wrong at the last,
 From following his master a little too fast,-
 Then closed the discourse in a scholarly tone,
 With a clear and intelligent creed of his own.
 That the man had his faults it were safe to infer,-
 Though I really don't recollect what they were,-
 I hardly remember this one little truth,
 When his case was discussed by the critical youth,
 The Seniors and Freshmen were sure to divide,
 And the former were all on the President's side!"¹⁸

*(Joshua Bates, D. D.)

Another verse which has the ear-marks of college days, is the epigram, A Plain Case which reads as follows:

"When Tutor Thompson goes to bed,
 That very moment, it is said,
 The cautious man puts out the light,
 And draws the curtain snug and tight.
 You marvel much why this should be,
 But when his spouse you chance to see,
 What seemed before a puzzling case
 Is plain as --Mrs. Thompson's face!"¹⁹

18. Saxe, S. G. - The Poetical Works p. 70.
 19. Ibid p. 250.

It will be recalled that Saxe was superintendent of the public schools of Franklin county for one year (1847-48). That experience in his career has furnished material for one of his cleverest poems- one that is especially enjoyable to study boys filled with a desire to "get even" with their tyrannical teachers.

Ye Pedagogue

" Righte learned is ye Pedagogue,
 Fulle apt to reade and spelle,
 And eke to teache ye parts of speeche,
 And strap ye urchins welle.

For as 'tis meete to soake ye feete,
 Ye ailinge heade to mende,
 Ye Younker's pate to stimulate,
 He beats ye other ende!

Righte lordie is ye Pedagogue
 As any turbaned Turke;
 For welle to rule ye District Schoole,
 It is no idle worke.

For oft Rebellion lurketh there
 In breaste of secrete foes,
 Of malice fulle, in waite to pulle
 Ye Pedagogue his nose!

Sometimes he heares, with trembling
 fears,
 Of ye ungodlie rogue
 On mischieffe bent, with felle intent
 To licke ye Pedagogue!

And if ye Pedagogue he smalle,
 When to ye battell led,
 In such a plight, God sende him
 mighte
 To breake ye rogue his heade!

Daye after daye, for little paye,
 He teacheth what he can,
 And bears ye yoke, to please ye folke,
 And ye Committee-man.

Ah! many crosses hath he borne,
 And many trials founde,
 Ye while he trudged ye district through,
 And boarded rounde and rounde!

Ah! many a steake hath he devoured,
 That, by ye taste and sighte,
 Was in disdaine, 't was very plaine,
 Of Days his patent righte!

Fulle solemn is ye Pedagogue,
 Amonge ye noisy churls,
 Yet other while he hath a smile
 To give ye handsome girls;

And one, - ye fayrest mayde of
 all,-
 To cheere his wayninge life,
 Shall be, when Springe ye flowers shall
 bringe,
 Ye Pedagogue his wife!"²⁰

But of all the most historic incidents which found expression by Saxe's pen, Carmen Laetum, is undoubtedly the best known. It was "recited, after dinner, before the Alumni of Middlebury College, at their semi-centennial celebration, August 22, 1850."²¹ The poem was written to commemorate "an unsuccessful attempt to unite Middlebury College with the University of Vermont."²²

Selections from this poem follow:

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20. Saxe, J. G. Poetical Works of- p. 58.
 21. Saxe, J. G. Complete poems p. 69.
 22. Ibid p. 69

"Indeed, I must tell you a bit of a tale,
To show you she's feeling remarkably hale;
How she turned up her nose, but a short time ago,
At a rather good-looking importunate beau,
And how she refused with a princess like carriage
A very respectable offer of marriage:

So away with the dream of connubial joys,
I'll stick to the homestead, and look to the boys."²³

The occasion when Saxe was enrolled as an honorary member of Psi Upsilon fraternity, by the Harvard Alpha Chapter (1853) was one of the happiest experiences of his life. As Mr. Taft states,

"The poet's love for Psi Upsilon and its members was deep and lasting, and he was a familiar figure at the reunions and bangnets of the order where some of his cleverest thoughts were delivered as toasts. On July 21, 1853, a few weeks after his initiation, Saxe read some characteristic post-prandial verses, part of which ran as follows:

'Success to Psi Upsilon - Beautiful Name!-
To the eye and the ear it is pleasant the same;
Many thanks to old Cadmus who made us
his debtors,
By inventing one day, those capital letters
Which still from the heart, we shall know how
to speak
When we've fairly forgotten the rest of our Greek.'

Above all-the chief blessing the gods can impart-
May you keep a clear head and a generous heart;
Remember 'tis blessed to give and forgive;
Live chiefly to love, and love while you live;
And dying when life's little journey is done,
May your last, fondest sigh, be Psi Upsilon!'

23. Ibid p. 69.

All references to Saxe's personal life emphasize his social, genial nature. He was never happier than when mingling with the most distinguished of his contemporaries. For twenty-three consecutive summers he went to Saratoga Springs, a fashionable watering place.

"At such a place he was in his element; a brilliant conversationalist and something of a ladies' man withal, he never tired of talking when he had a good subject, and interested listeners; and often he would spend many happy hours conversing far into the night. The fashions and foibles of the famous watering place afforded a rich mine of satire."²⁴

The Song of Saratoga is the most representative of this type of the poet's work. The popularity of this poem in the press in summer months was similar to Clement C. Moore's "The Night Before Christmas" in winter time.²⁵ The poem follows:

'Pray, what do they do at the
Spring?'
The question is easy to ask;
But to answer it fully, my dear,
Were rather a serious task.
And yet, in a bantering way,
As the magpie or mocking-bird
sings,
I'll venture a bit of a song
To tell what they do at the Springs!

Imprimis, my darling, they drink
The waters so sparkling and clear;
Though the flavor is none of the best,
And the odor exceedingly queer;
But the fluid is mingled, you know,
With wholesome medicinal things,
So they drink, and they drink, and they
drink,-
And that's what they do at the
Springs!

24. Taft, R. W. p. 54.

25. Ibid p. 55.

All references to Burns's personal life emphasize his

social, genial nature. He was never happier than when

mingling with the most distinguished of his contemporaries.

For twenty-three consecutive winters he went to Saratoga

Spring, a fashionable watering place.

"At such a place he was in his element; a brilliant conversationalist and something of a leader; man withal, he never tired of talking when he had a good subject, and interested listeners; and often he would spend many happy hours conversing far into the night. The seasons and topics of the famous watering place afforded a rich mine of matter."²²

The Book of Burial is the most representative of this

type of the poet's work. The popularity of this poem in

the present is almost certain was similar to Clement B. Moore's

"The Night Before Christmas" in winter time.²³ The poem

follows:

"Tarry, what tarry do at the
Spring?
The question is easy to ask;
But so answer is truly, my dear,
Were rather a serious task.
And yet, in a dancing way,
As the magic of mocking-bird
Alas,
I'll venture a bit of a song
To tell what they do at the Spring!"

Important, my darling, then drink
The waters so sparkling and clear;
Though the flavor is none of the best,
And the odor is scarcely sweet;
But the drink is medicinal, you know,
With wholesome medicinal things,
So they drink, and they drink, and they
Drink,
And that's what they do at the
Spring!"

Then with appetites keen as a knife,
 They hasten to breakfast or dine
 (The latter precisely at three,
 The former from seven till nine).
 Ye gods! what a rustle and rush
 When the eloquent dinner-bell rings!
 When they eat, and they eat, and they
 eat,-
 And that's what they do at the
 Springs!

Now they stroll in the beautiful walks,
 Or loll in the shade of the trees;
 Where many a whisper is heard
 That never is told by the breeze;
 And hands are commingled with
 hands,
 Regardless of conjugal rings;
 And they flirt, and they flirt, and they
 flirt,-
 And that's what they do at the
 Springs!

The drawing-rooms now are ablaze,
 And music is shrieking away;
 Terpsichore governs the hour,
 And Fashion was never so gay!
 An arm round a tapering waist,
 How closely and fondly it clings!
 So they waltz, and they waltz, and they
 waltz,-
 And that's what they do at the
 Springs!

In short-as it goes in the world-
 They eat, and they drink, and they
 sleep;
 They talk, and they walk, and they
 woo;
 They sigh, and they laugh, and they
 weep;
 They read, and they ride, and they
 dance
 (With other unspeakable things);
 They pray, and they play, and they
 pay,--
 And that's what they do at the
 Springs!²⁶

Then with agonized looks as a child,
They started to protest at this
(The latter gradually at first,
The former from even till then).
Ye gods! what a battle and rush
When the eloquent dinner-bell rings!
When they eat, and they eat, and they
eat, -
And that's what they do at the
Spring!

Now they stroll in the beautiful walks,
Or loaf in the shade of the trees;
There many a whisper is heard
That never is told to the breeze;
And hands are congratulated with
hands,
Rejoicing of congratulating things;
And they flirt, and they flirt, and they
flirt, -
And that's what they do at the
Spring!

The drawing-rooms now are ablaze,
And music is whisking away;
Tentative converse the host,
And fashion was never so gay!
As ever found a festive waist,
Now closely and fondly it clings;
So they wait, and they wait, and they
wait, -
And that's what they do at the
Spring!

In short, as it goes in the world -
They eat, and they drink, and they
sleep;
They talk, and they walk, and they
woo;
They sigh, and they laugh, and they
weep;
They read, and they ride, and they
dance
(With other unnumberable things);
They play, and they play, and they
play, -
And that's what they do at the
Spring!

The versatility of Saxe needs little comment to one familiar with his poems. His pen seemed equally trained to depict serious or light moods. His carefree jovial nature often expressed itself in little personal skits, written frequently to celebrate some family experience. The following poem, written at the time of Saxe's youngest brother's marriage to Mrs. Saxe's youngest sister, is typical of this phase of his work:

"Oh lovely Sal, you naughty gal,
Pray how's your noble Jim?
And how is she who made for me
A brother-in-law of him?"²⁷

Another instance where the personal furnished him with the theme is found when, "Saxe laughingly alludes to his size in his Rhymed Epistle to the Editor of The Knickerbocker Magazine, in the lines.

"Now I am a young man you must learn,
Less famous for beauty than strength,
And for aught I could ever discern,
Of rather superfluous length.
In truth 'tis but seldom one meets
Such a Titan in human abodes,
And when I stalk over the streets,
I'm a perfect Colossal of roads."²⁸

The sheer joy which Saxe felt in living is well expressed in the poem,

27. Taft, R. W. p. 48.
28. Ibid p. 52.

The versatility of Gurne needs little comment to one familiar with his poems. His pen seemed equally at home in depicting scenes of light and shade. His character revealed nature often expressed itself in little personal sketches. Written frequently to celebrate some family experience. The following poem, written at the time of Gurne's young-est brother's marriage to Mrs. Gurne's youngest sister, is typical of this phase of his work:

"Oh lovely girl, you marry him,
Every heart's your wish him
And now is the time for me
A brother-in-law of mine"

Another instance where the personal furnished him with the theme is found when, "Thus innocently alludes to his wife in his Hyperborean Magazine to the Editor of the Hyperborean Magazine, in the lines,

"Now I am a young man you must learn,
Less famous for beauty than strength,
And for aught I could ever discern,
Of better opportunities I want.
In youth, I've not seldom the name
Such a title is human nature,
And when I stain over the name,
I'm a perfect colonial of course."

The short story which Gurne told in living is well represented in the poem.

BY Mrs. W. H. W. N. N.
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N. 22.

Lines on My Thirty-Ninth Birthday

"Oh, few that roam this world of ours,
To feel its thorns and pluck its flowers,
Have trod a brighter path than mine
From blithe thirteen to thirty-nine.
Health, home, and friends (life's solid part)
A merry laugh, a fresh young heart,
Poetic dreams and love divine-
Have I got these at thirty-nine,
Oh, Time! Forego thy wasted spite,
And lay thy future lashes light,
And, trust me, I will not repine,
At twice the count of thirty-nine."²⁹

The birth of twin sons, born to Saxe's brother, was the occasion of the following lines:

"The proverb says in somber tone
'Troubles seldom come alone,'
But, to recompense our cares,
Blessings are sometimes sent in pairs.
Thus, when a single babe was due,
The grateful father welcomed two.
God bless them in this world of trouble;
May both find all their blessings double,
And to the joy of sire and mother
Each prove an honor to his brother."³⁰

The poet's last collection of verse, Leisure-Day Rhymes (1875) show that he is thinking and writing about more placid themes; and in Here and Hereafter, Saxe gives glimpses of his own theological views:

" As for Me,
My creed is short as any man's may be;
'Tis written in the sermon on the Mount,
And in the Pater-Noster, I account

29. Ibid p. 66.

30. Ibid p. 49.

Lines on Mr. Felix-Wright's Birthday

"Oh, how good your life would be,
 To feel the sun and wind and flowers,
 Have such a bright path than mine,
 From birth to death in thirty-nine.
 Health, home, and friends (little's gold part)
 A merry laugh, a true young heart,
 Poetic dreams and love divine—
 Have I got these at thirty-nine?
 Oh, time! you've got my wasted years,
 And lay my future years light,
 And, grant me, I will not regret,
 At least the dawn of thirty-nine."

The birth of twin sons, born to Felix's brother, was

the occasion of the following lines:

"The grove is now in summer time,
 'Tis good and warm and bright,
 But, to recognize our cases,
 We should have remembered that in June,
 When a single babe was due,
 Two brothers were welcomed here.
 God bless them in this world of trouble;
 May both find all their friends beside,
 And the joy of life and mother,
 Each prove as happy as his brother."

The poet's last collection of verses, Letters-Box

Number (1878) show that he is thinking and writing about

more plastic themes; and in Have and Have-not, some

give glimpses of his own idealistic views:

"As for me,
 My creed is short as any man's way;
 'His virtue is the virtue on the mount,'
 And in the Father-Hunter, I account

28. 1814
 29. 1814

The words Our Father (had we lost the rest
Of that sweet prayer, the briefest and the best
In all the liturgies) of higher worth,
To ailing souls, than all the creeds on earth."³¹

And to the doubting person, anxious of the future destiny
of man, Saxe gives comfort:

"No tongue inspired
Hark plainly told us that. I cannot tell-
It is not given to know - where we shall dwell;
I only know-and humbly leave the rest
To Wisdom Infinite - that what is best
For each will be his place; that we shall wear
In the Beyond the character we bear
In passing."³²

To the man mourning over his son's genius which was cut
short before it had had time to develop, Saxe again pens
the hopeful word:

"O Bildad; let it soothe thy grief,
That He who gave the talents thou hast sought
To cherish, and by culture wouldst have wrought
To highest excellence in this thy son,
Will surely finish what thou hast begun."³³

Saxe's more religious poems included a beautiful hymn,
Miserere Domine, which offers hope of forgiveness to any
sinner who trusts in God's infinite mercy:

"Our Father! ever blessed name;
To thee we bring our sin and shame;
Weak though we be, perverse of will,
Thou art our gracious Father still,
Who knowest well how frail we be,
Miserere Domine!"³⁴

31. Saxe, J. G. p. 92.

32. Ibid p. 93.

33. Ibid p. 93.

34. Saxe, J. G. - The Poetical Works of-- p. 97.

The words But Father (and we lost the rest
of that sweet prayer, the witness and the best
in all the liturgy) of higher worth,
To singing words, than all the words we have.

And in the doctored version, and in the future history
of man, there gives comfort:

"No longer inspired
But plainly told as truth. I cannot tell-
It is not given to know - what we shall dwell;
I only know and hardly leave the rest
To Wisdom Infinite - that what is best
For each will be his gift; that we shall wear
In the Beyond, the character we bear
In passing."

To the man working over his own's genius which was not
short before it had had time to develop, there again comes
the hopeful word:

"O Eldest, let it soothe thy grief,
That he who gave the talents then most sought
To cherish, and by others sought have wrought
To highest excellence in this day too,
Will surely find what thou hast sought."

There's more religious poems included a beautiful hymn.

Minister's Hymns, which offers hope of forgiveness to any

sinner who trusts in God's infinite mercy:

"Our Father, ever blessed name;
To thee we bring our sin and shame;
Weak though we be, O Father of all,
Thou art our gracious Father still,
Who knowest well how frail we be,
Minister's Hymns."

31. Book, 1. 2. p. 22.
32. Book, 1. 2. p. 22.
33. Book, 1. 2. p. 22.
34. Book, 1. 2. - The Pastoral Words 22- p. 22.

Two themes which furnished Saxe ample material for his poems were democracy and satire. In an unusually humorous vein he shows his love of democracy by severely satirizing the false pretensions of would be aristocrats for family pride in their ancestors. This bitter arraignment of American ancestor worship is best seen in The Proud Miss McBride, one of Saxe's longest and best known poems. He writes:

"Of all the notable things on earth,
The queerest one is pride of birth,
Among our 'fierce Democracie'!
A bridge across a hundred years,
Without a prop to save it from sneers,-
Not even a couple of rotten peers,-
A thing for laughter, fleers, and jeers,
Is American aristocracy:

- - - - -
English and Irish, French and Spanish
German, Italian, Dutch, and Danish,
Crossing their veins until they vanish
In one conglomeration!
So subtle a tangle of Blood, indeed,
No modern Harvey will ever succeed
In finding the circulation!

Depend upon it, my snobbish friend,
Your family thread you can can't ascend,
Without good reason to apprehend
You may find it waxed at the farther end
By some plebeian vocation;
Or, worse than that, your boasted Line
May end in a loop of stronger twine,
That plagued some worthy relation!"³⁵

From this same poem comes a stanza, peculiarly

35. Ibid p. 11.

The Negro which furnished some ample material for his
poems were democracy and justice. In an unusually democratic
way he shows his love of democracy by actively maintaining
the fair pretensions of some of his friends for family
pride in their ancestry. This is the assignment of
American ancestry which is best seen in the First Book
Harvard, one of these is Harvard and Harvard name. He

writes:

For all the noble things in earth,
The greatest one is pride of birth.
Among our 'little democrats'
A better notion a hundred years
Without a sign to have it free again,
Not even a couple of foreign names,
A name for laughter, honor, and love,
Is American ancestry.

English and Irish, French and Spanish
German, Italian, Dutch, and Welsh
Crossing their veins with their veins
In the composition!
He builds a family of blood, indeed,
No matter how they all ever crossed
Is the line the ancestral!

Depend upon it, my noble friend,
Your family should you not succeed,
Without good reason to explain
You may find it asked at the father end
By some pleasant occasion;
Or, worse than that, your boasted line
May end in a line of stronger line,
That played some worthy role!

From this poem comes a stanza, partially

appropriate to the situation of the financial world in 1929:

"Alas! that people who've got their box
Of cash beneath the best of locks,
Secure from all financial shocks,
Should stock their fancy with fancy
stocks,
And madly rush upon Wall Street
rocks,
Without the least apology;
Alas! that people whose money affairs
Are sound beyond all need of repairs,
Should ever tempt the bulls and bears
Of Mammon's fierce Zoology!"³⁶

The poet's love of democracy ^{as} in regard ~~to~~ financial equality, and intense hatred of the idle rich ~~are~~ keenly apparent in his bitter satire, The Money-King. The power of wealth he describes in the lines:

"That mighty potentate, the Money-King!
His kingdom vast extends o'er every land,
And nations bow before his high command,
The weakest tremble, and his power obey,
The strongest honor, and confess his sway.
He rules the Rulers!- e'en the tyrant Czar
Asks his permission ere he goes to war;
The Turk, submissive to his royal might,
By his decree has gracious leave to fight;
Whilst e'en Britannia makes her humblest bow
Before her Barings, not her Barons now,
Or on the Rothchild suppliantly calls
(Her affluent 'uncle' with the golden
balls),
Begs of the Jew that he will kindly
spare
Enough to put her trident in repair,
And pawns her diamonds, while she
humble craves
The money^{*}king's consent to 'rule the
waves!"³⁷

36. Ibid p. 12.

37. Ibid p. 211.

The power of money is apparent:

"He builds the house where Christian
people pray,
And rears a bagnio just across the way;
Pays to the priest his stinted annual
fee;
Rewards the lawyer for his venal plea;
Sends an apostle to the heathen's aid;
And cheats the Choctaws, for the good
of trade;
Lifts by her heels and Ellsler to renown,
Or, bribing "Jenny," brings an angel
down!
He builds the Theatres and gambling
Halls,
Lloyds and Almacks, St. Peter's and St.
Paul's;
Sin's gay retreats and Fashion's gilded
rooms,
Hotels and Factories, Palaces and
Tombs;
Bids Commerce spread her wings to
every gale;
Bends to the breeze the pirate's bloody
sail;
Helps Science seek new worlds among
the stars;
Profanes our own with mercenary
wars;
The friend of wrong, the equal friend
of right,
Oft may we bless and oft deplore his
might,
As buoyant hope or darkening fears
prevail,
And good or evil turns the moral scale."³⁸

Saxe's strong dislike of the extreme wealthy is expressed
in:

"Of all the ills that owe their baneful rise
To wealth o'er grown, the most despotic vice.
Is Circean Luxury; prolific dame

38. Ibid p. 212.

The power of money is apparent:

"He builds the house where Christian
 people pray,
 And turns a bargain that serves the way;
 Says to the priest his richest annual
 fee;
 Rewards the lawyer for his usual plea;
 Gives an apostle to the heathen's aid;
 And cheats the doctor, for the good
 of trade;
 Little by law, and little by power,
 Of riches 'tis that he brings an angel
 down;
 He builds the theatre and gambling
 hall,
 Gives and Alms, St. Peter's and St.
 Paul's;
 His gay palaces and Venetian's allied
 rooms,
 Hotels and restaurants, Palaces and
 ponds;
 His Countess spreads her wings to
 every side;
 Seeks to the prince the prince's glory
 sell;
 Helps science seek new worlds among
 the stars;
 Promotes our own with necessary
 wars;
 The friend of whom, the cruel friend
 at night,
 Of may we bless and oft deplore his
 might,
 As prudent hope or desperate fear
 prevail,
 And good or evil turns the mortal scale."
 32

Some of the strong feelings of the extreme party is expressed

in:

"Not all the life that our great world has
 To wealth or power, the most despotic vice,
 Is given to luxury; grotesque and

Of mental impotence and moral shame,
 And all the cankering evils that de-
 vase
 The human form and dwarf the human
 race.
 See yon strange figure, and a moment
 scan
 That slenderest sample of the genus
 man!
 Mark, as he ambles, those precarious
 pegs
 Which by their motion must be deemed
 his legs!
 He has a head,-one may be sure of
 that
 By just observing that he wears a hat;
 That he has arms is logically plain
 From his wide coat-sleeves and his pen-
 dent cane;
 A tongue as well,-the inference is
 fair,
 Since, on occasion, he can lisp and
 swear.
 You ask his use? - that's not so very
 clear,
 Unless to spend five thousand pounds a
 year
 In modish vices which his soul adores,
 Drink, dress, and gaming, horses,
 hounds, and scores
 Of other follies which I can't rehearse,
 Dear to himself and dearer to his purse."³⁹

The poet's true love of equality in all things - of
 real democracy in all walks of life abounds in such lines
 as:

"To me the boon may gracious Heaven
 assign,-
 No cringing suppliant at Mammon's
 shrine,
 Nor slave of Poverty,-with joy to
 share

39. Ibid p215.

Of mental impotence and moral shame,
And all the suffering evils that be-
vices
The human form and heart the human
race.
See you strange figures, and a woman,
seen
That slenderest sample of the female
kind;
Mark, as he smiles, those precatious
pages
Which by their motion must be deemed
his legs;
He has a hand, - one may be sure of
that;
By just observing that he wears a hat;
That he has arms is logically plain
From his coat-sleeves and his non-
best name;
A finger as well, - the inference is
easy,
Stance, on occasion, he can find and
must.
You mark his coat - that's not so very
clear,
Unless to spend five thousand pounds a
year.
In rolled vices which his mind adores,
Drink, games, and gambling, horses,
hounds, and doves
Of other follies which I can't remember,
Best to himself and better to his purse."

The host's true love of equality in all things - of
real democracy in all walks of life abounds in each line

and

"For me the food may gracious Heaven
send -
No earthly equivalent of Wangan's
surrender,
For slave of Poverty, - with joy to
share

The happy mean expressed in Agur's
 prayer:-
 A house(my own) to keep me safe and
 warm,
 A shade in sunshine, and a shield in
 storm;
 A generous board, and fitting raiment,
 clear
 Of debts and duns throughout the cir-
 cling year;
 Silver and gold, in moderate store, that I
 May purchase joys that only these can
 buy;
 Some gems of art, a cultured mind to
 please,
 Books, pictures, statues, literary ease.
 That 'Time is money' prudent Frank-
 lin shows
 In rhyming couplets and sententious
 prose.
 Oh, had he taught the world, in prose
 and rhyme,
 The higher truth that Money may be
 Time!
 And showed the people, in his pleasant
 ways,
 The art of coining dollars into days!
 Days for improvement, days for social
 life,
 Days for your God, your children, and
 your wife;
 Some days for pleasure, and an hour to
 spend
 In genial converse with an honest friend.
 Such days be mine! - and grant me,
 Heaven, but this,
 With blooming health, man's highest
 earthly bliss,-
 And I will read, without a sign or
 frown,
 The startling news that stocks are going
 down;
 Hear without envy that a stranger
 hoards
 Or spends more treasure than a mint
 affords;
 See my next neighbor pluck a golden
 plum,
 Calm and content within my cottage-
 home;

Take for myself what honest thrift may
 bring,
 And for his kindness bless the Money-
 King!⁴⁰

Saxe had a profound love of satirizing the foibles of his day, and this fondness for satire has given the world some of his best known poems. His dislike of the young widow, so beautifully dressed in mourning, yet without any real sadness in her heart is humorously commented on:

"I saw her last night at a party
 -----Boiled over in billows of crape!"⁴¹

His irony for this type of person is continued:

"I thought:- It is scarce without measure-
 The sorrow that goes by the yard!"⁴²

Another observation which Saxe made about the irony of life, and how happiness is marred by foolishness is found in The Way of the World which follows:

"A youth would marry a maiden,
 For fair and fond was she;
 But she was rich, and he was poor,
 And so it might not be.
 A lady never could wear-
 Her mother held it firm-
 A gown that came of an India
 plant,
 Instead of an India worm.-
 And so the cruel word was spoken;
 And so it was two hearts were broken.

40. Ibid p. 216.

41. Ibid p. 8.

42. Ibid p. 9.

There for myself what business could I say
 And for a business there the money
 Eliza

There had a profound love of assisting the ladies
 of his day and this fondness for nature has given the
 world some of his best known poems. His simile of the
 young widow, so beautifully dressed in mourning, yet
 without any real sadness in her heart is wonderfully
 connected on;

There for last night at a party
 -----Dressed over in billows of crystal

His irony for this type of person is continued;

At thought:-- It is scarce without measure
 The sorrow that goes by the yard;

Another observation which says about the irony

of life, and how happiness is marred by foolishness is

found in The Day of the World when follows:

A youth would marry a maiden,
 For fair and good was she;
 But she was rich, and he was poor,
 And so it might not be.
 A lady never would wear--
 Her mother held it firm--
 A gown that came of an Indian
 plant.
 Instead of an Indian gown--
 And so the gown was spoken;
 And so it was two hearts were broken.

40. 1014	p. 318.
41. 1015	p. 318.
42. 1016	p. 318.

A youth would marry a maiden,
 For fair and fond was she;
 But he was high and she was low,
 And so it might not be.
 A man who had worn a spur,
 In ancient battle won,
 Had sent it down with great re-
 renown,
 To goad his future son!-
 And so the cruel word was spoken;
 And so it was two hearts were broken.

A youth would marry a maiden,
 For fair and fond was she;
 But their sires disputed about the
 Mass,
 And so it might not be.
 A couple of wicked kings,
 Three hundred years ago,
 Had played at a royal game of chess,
 And the Church had been a
 pawn!-
 And so the cruel word was spoken;
 And so it was two hearts were broken."⁴³

The mother eager to marry off her daughter, who comes
 to Saratoga Springs, serves as a subject of ridicule-

In Cloe to Clara this situation is discussed.

"'Tis pleasant to guess at the reason
 The genuine motive, which brings
 Such all-sorts of folks, in the season,
 To stop a few days at the Springs.
 Some come to partake of the waters
 (The sensible, old-fashioned elves);
 Some come to dispose of their daughters,
 And some to dispose of -themselves!"⁴⁴

This same poem describes the general gossip which goes on
 at such places and by such people -

43. Ibid p. 7-8.

44. Ibid p. 64.

A youth would marry a maiden,
For fair and fond was she;
But he was high and she was low,
And so it might not be.
A man who had been a knight,
In ancient battle won,
Had sent it down with great re-
verence,
To good his father's hall -
And so the cruel word was spoken;
And so it was two hearts were broken.

A youth would marry a maiden,
For fair and fond was she;
But he was high and she was low,
And so it might not be.
A couple of mixed blood,
Three hundred years ago,
Had offered at a royal feast of state,
And the Church had said a
good -
And so the cruel word was spoken;
And so it was two hearts were broken.

The mother came to marry off her daughter, who came

to Saragosa Bridge, never as a subject of ridicule -

In this is shown this situation is discussed.

With pleasant to guests at the season
The guests were, which were
Such and some of them, in the season,
To stop a few days at the bridge.
Some came to parties of the water
(The beautiful, old-fashioned river);
Some came to listen of their language,
And some to listen of - (the river).

This time was described the general aspect which goes on

at each place and by each people -

43. 1915 P. V-2.
43. 1915 P. 64.

"And then what a gossiping sight!
 What talk about William and Harry;
 How Julia was spending last night;
 And why Miss Morton should marry:
 Dear Clara, I've happened to see
 Full many a tea table slaughter;
 But, really, scandal with tea
 Is nothing to scandal with water!"⁴⁵

Thus it is evident that all subjects, from the legislature to the idiosyncracies of woman's dress afforded Saxe rich ground for his popular satires.

"He who laughs," said the Mother of Goethe, can commit no deadly sin!"⁴⁶ Sterne insisted that every laugh lengthens the term of our lives. "The Emperor Titus thought he had lost a day if he had passed it without laughing."⁴⁷ Now what is laughter? A brief review of the theory of laughter based on the principles stated by Meredith, Hobbes, Sully, and Bergson follows:

Regarding the origin of laughter, Meredith says,

"The precise origin of ancient classical comedy is a matter of dispute. Aristotle observes the invention of comedy was claimed by the Dorians of Megara, and likewise by the Dorians of Sicily; he adds that at all events comedy originated in the improvisations of the leaders in the Phallic song and dance, noting that the custom of the Phallic procession has been preserved up to his time in many cities. The Phallic procession was associated with the worship of Dionysus. In The Origin of Attic Comedy, London, 1914, F. M. Cornford argues from a

45. Ibid p. 63.

46. Whipple, Edwin, P. Literature and Life.
 Boston, Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1899, p. 86.

47. Ibid p. 86.

"And then what a beautiful night!
 What fair about William and Mary;
 How little was spending last night;
 And yet Mrs. Norton should marry;
 Dear Clara, I've happened to see
 Full many a tea table alight;
 But, really, compared with tea
 Is nothing so wonderful with water!"

There is no evidence that all subjects, from the

legislature to the idiosyncrasy of women, a dress of

folded back rich ground for his popular satire.

"He who laughs," said the Master of Goethe, can

commit no deadly sin."⁴⁶ Sterne insisted that every

laugh expresses the truth of our lives. "The Emperor of

thought he had lost a day if he had passed it without

laughing."⁴⁷ Now what is laughter? A brief review of

the theory of laughter based on the principles stated by

Herbert Spencer, Hobbes, Edgell, and Darwin follows:

Regarding the origin of laughter, Spencer says,

"The practice of ridicule or satirical classical comedy
 is a matter of course. Aristotle observes the in-
 version of comedy was coined by the Romans of
 Greece, and likewise by the Romans of Italy; he
 adds that all comic comedy originated in the in-
 provocation of the leaders of the Phallic song and
 dance, noting that the master of the Phallic pro-
 ceedings has been preserved up to his time in many
 cities. The Phallic procession was associated with
 the worship of Dionysus. In The Origin of Laughter
 (London, 1914, W. H. Cresswell) appears from a

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46. Ibid. p. 53.
 47. Whipple, David, P. Literature and Life.
 Boston, Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1892, p. 62.
 48. Ibid. p. 53.

study of Aristophanes that the type arose from a marriage ritual, in which the risen god, Dionysus typified the revival of vegetation when the winter is past (he seeing the fructifying principle), and which stimulated the 'Union of Heaven and Earth for the renewal of all life in Spring'."48

While the origin of laughter is uncertain, there is no uncertainty about the lack of dignity which was at first associated with it.

"It was long ago suspected by Greece and Rome who had no good opinion of it. A Victorian social code frowned on laughter-loving women. Neither the painter nor the sculptor can find any beauty in it for his art. --- It is not found in the temple nor where men seek honor and glory. Be one a lover, a singer, a dreamer, or a warrior and such he will not laugh. Aristotle has observed that in Greece men who were eminent in philosophy, politics, poetry, or the arts were melancholy men. Laughter - the word itself can claim no better origin than an Anglo-Saxon cacophony. Out of the Greek a laugh comes down to us as a cochinnation and out of the Latin it comes rooted in our verbs to deride and to ridicule."49

George Meredith, however, presents a balance between the good and bad effects of laughter.

"Laughter is open to perversion, like other good things; the scornful and the brutal sorts are not unknown to us; but the laughter directed by the Comic Spirit is a harmless wine, conducing to sobriety in the degree that it enlivens. It enters you like fresh air into a study, as when one of the sudden contrasts of the comic idea floods the brain like reassuring daylight. ---That which you give out-

48. Meredith, George An Essay on Comedy and the Uses of the Comic Spirit, New York, Scribner's Sons, 1918 p. 179-80.

49. Letters, Lexington, University of Ky. V. 5- No. 20. p. 28. August 1932.

study of the vegetation of the type area from a
 various point of view, in which the river and the
 typical the typical of vegetation when the water
 is high (the water the typical principle), and
 which estimates the 'Union of Heaven and Earth for
 the removal of all life in Spring'.

While the origin of the vegetation is important, there is
 no necessity about the lack of rigidity which was at first
 associated with it.

It was found also associated by Brown and Jones who
 had no good opinion of it. A Victorian social code
 seemed to have been the cause. Neither the painter
 nor the sculptor was free any longer in his art.
 --- It is not found in the temple nor where one seeks
 honor and glory. He has a lover, a sister, a daughter,
 or a warrior and even he will not laugh. Aristotle
 has observed that in Greece men were eminent in
 philosophy, politics, poetry, or the arts were melan-
 choly men. Laughter - this word itself can claim no
 better origin than an Anglo-Saxon onomatopoeia. Out of
 the Greek a laugh comes down to us as a condescension
 and out of the Latin it comes rooted in our words as
laugh and laughable.

George Meredith, however, presents a balance between

the good and bad effects of laughter. Laughter
 "Laughter is open to perversion. Like other good
 things, the cheerful and the genial words are not un-
 known to us; but the laughter directed by the comic
 spirit is a harmless wit, conducing to merriment in
 the world that is evil. It enters you like fresh
 air into a staid, or when one of the sudden contrasts
 of the comic idea floods the brain like the sunburst
 of light. -- That which you give out

48. Meredith, George. An Essay on Comedy and the Uses
 of the Comic Spirit. New York, Scribner's Sons,
 1913. P. 178-80.
49. Laughter, Laughter. Illustrated by H. S. S. S.
 P. 25. August 1922.

-the joyful roar- is not the better part; let that go to good-fellowship and the benefit of the lungs."⁵⁰

In order that one may fully understand Meredith's description of laughter, it is necessary to know what he means by the Comic Spirit.

"It is a Spirit overhead --- luminous and watchful. It has the sage's brows, and the sunny malice of a faun lurks at the corners of the half closed lips drawn in an idle wariness of half-tension- ---was once a big round satyr's laugh--men's future upon earth does not attract it; and whenever they wax out of proportion, overblown, affected, pretentious, bombastical, hypocritical, pedantic fantastically delicate; whenever it sees them self-deceived or hood winked, given to run riot in idolatries, drifting into vanities, congregating in absurdities, planning short-sightedly, plotting dementedly; whenever they are variance with their professions, and violate the unwritten but perceptible laws binding them in consideration one to another. Whenever they offend sound reason, fair justice; are false in humility or mined with conceit, individually, or in the bulk; the Spirit overhead will look humanely malign, and cast an oblique light on them, followed by valleys of silvery laughter. That is the Comic Spirit."⁵¹

Meredith considers that laughter "is more of the order of smile, finely-tempered, showing sunlight of the mind, mental richness rather than noisy enormity."⁵²

Another well-known theory of laughter has been advanced by the English philosopher, Thomas Hobbes, whom Addison in the Spectator No 47 quotes as stating,

"The passion of laughter is nothing else but sudden glory arising from some sudden conception of some eminency in ourselves by comparison with the infirmity of others, or with our own formerly;

50. Meredith, George An Essay on Comedy and the Uses of the Comic Spirit, New York, Scribner's Sons, 1918, p.145

51. Ibid p. 141-142.

52. Ibid p. 141.

for men laugh at the folly of themselves past, when they come suddenly to remembrance, except they bring with them any present dishonor. 'Fortunately Hobbes in his work, Leviathan, defines the meaning of the phrase 'sudden glory'. 'Sudden Glory', is the passion which maketh those grimaces called 'laughter'; and is caused either by some sudden act of their own, that pleaseth them; or by the apprehension of some deformed thing in another, by comparison whereof they suddenly applaud themselves. And it is incident most to them, that they are conscious of the fewest abilities in themselves who are forced to keep themselves in their own favor, by observing the imperfections of other men, and therefore much laughter at the defects of others, is a sign of pusillanimity. For of great minds, one of the proper works is to help and free others from scorn; and compare themselves only with the most able."⁵³

Regarding his observations about laughter, Addison concludes, "Every one laughs at somebody that is in an inferior state of folly to himself."⁵⁴ He substantiates this theory by quoting customs of various countries like England and Germany; for instance, he continues,

"It was formerly the custom for every great house in England to keep a tame fool dressed in petticoats, that the heir of the family might have an opportunity of joking upon him, and diverting himself with his infirmities."⁵⁵

For this same purpose, idiots were retained in the court at Germany so that the courtiers could use them as a butt

53. Hobbes, Thomas, Leviathan; or the Matter, Form, & Power of a Commonwealth Ecclesiastical and Civil, Cambridge (Eng.) Univ. Press 1904. p. 34.

54. Addison, Joseph. The Spectator, No. 47, Philadelphia, James Crissy, 1838, p. 260.

55. Ibid p. 261.

for their jests."⁵⁶ Addison continues to enlarge on this principle when he says,

"Thus we see in proportion as one man is more refined than another, he chooses his fool out of a lower or higher class of mankind, or to speak in a more philosophical language, that secret elation or pride of heart which is generally called laughter, arises in him, from his comparing himself with an object below him, whether it so happens that it be a natural or an artificial fool. It is, indeed, very possible that the persons we laugh at may in the main of their characters, be much wiser men than ourselves; but if they would have us laugh at them, they must fall short of us in those respects which stir up the passion."⁵⁷

Still a different theory of laughter is presented by Henri Bergson in his book Laughter: an Essay on the Meaning of the Comic. On this subject Bergson makes three observations:

- 1) The Comic does not exist outside the pale of what is strictly human.
- 2) Absence of feeling must accompany laughter. "Indifference is its natural environment, for laughter has no greater foe than emotion."⁵⁸
- 3) Laughter "must have a social signification. You would hardly appreciate the comic if you felt your-

56. Ibid p. 261.

57. Ibid p. 263.

58. Bergson, Henri. Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic. New York, MacMillan, 1924, p. 4.

for their beauty. The artist's conclusion is evident in the

principles which are

"When we see in proportion as one man is more
refined than another, he shows his face out of a
set of higher plane of mind, or he speaks in a more
philosophical language, that comes either of grace
of heart which is generally called intellect, or else
from his training, himself with an object below
him, whether it be because that is his natural or
an artificial fact. It is, indeed, very possible
that the person we judge to be in the main of their
character, be much more than otherwise; but
it may well have an effect on them, they may tell
us of it in those respects which tell of the
person."

Still a different theory of laughter is presented

by Henri Bergson in his book Laughter: An Essay on the

Mechanism of the Comic. On this subject Bergson makes

three observations:

1) The comic does not arise outside the gate of

what is strictly human.

2) Absence of feeling must accompany laughter. "In-

distinction of the natural environment, for laughter is

no greater for than emotion."

3) Laughter must have a social signification.

For we can easily appreciate the comic if we feel your-

56. 1913 P. 257
57. 1913 P. 258
58. Bergson, Henri. Laughter: An Essay on the Mechanism of the Comic. New York, Harcourt, 1920, p. 2.

self isolated from others."⁵⁹ All in all Bergson emphasizes that laughter is an appeal to the intellect rather than to the emotions. Throughout the entire book, he attempts to explain laughter in terms of the mechanical.

"The attitudes, gestures, and movements of the human body are laughable in exact proportion as that body reminds us of a mere machine."⁶⁰

Again he contends that the image in all laughable objects is "something mechanical in something living; in fact something comic."⁶¹

Consequently after these various theories of laughter have been studied, it seems possible to tell why and when we laugh as well as at what we laugh.

The principle which explains what makes one laugh may be summed up in this law - "a laugh begins in a recognition of some incongruity of idea, action, character, or situation."⁶² Accordingly this law bears out Bergson's theory that laughter begins in the head and not in the heart. "Incongruity" as used in this definition means, "any departure from, or contradiction of what one's experience of life and of people has led him to expect or regard as normal. It is a departure from what most people

59. Ibid p. 8.

60. Ibid p.29.

61. Ibid p. 77.

62. Letters, Lexington, University of Ky. V. 5. No. 20. August 1932. p. 32.

would call common sense as they see it expressed in custom, habit, convention, manner, and conduct."⁶³ James Sully in An Essay on Laughter quote Schopenhauer as saying,

"In every instance the phenomenon of laughter indicates the sudden perception of an incongruity between a conception and a real object, which is to be understood or 'thought' through (i. e., by means of) this conception.----- The greater and the more unexpected, the incongruity, the more violent will be our laughter."⁶⁴

Sully explains incongruity as

"lack of harmony and of mutual fitness.---A country woman displaying in her dress or in her speech a bizarre mixture of the peasant and the fine lady, a proposal to climb a mountain in dainty high-heeled shoes. ---These pull at the muscles of laughter because they strike us as a forcing together of things which hurtle and refuse to consort."⁶⁵

The subject of incongruity naturally falls into four divisions:

- 1) Laughter, for incongruity of ideas;
- 2) Opposites, for incongruity of objects in a situation;
- 3) Contradictions for incongruity of character, its sham, bluff, and hypocrisy;
- 4) Disparities, for promise without performance that makes an action comic. Life is rich in such incongruities."⁶⁶

The second law of laughter explains why one will laugh, and "requires that one get out of his recognition of some incongruity a sudden sense of his own superiority."⁶⁷

63. Ibid. p. 32.

64. Sully, James, An Essay on Laughter, New York, Longmans, Green & Co. 1902 p. 130.

65. Ibid p. 108.

66. Letters p. 33.

67. Ibid p. 33.

would call common sense as they are if expressed in words.

But, conversely, manner, and conduct. "As James Gull is

as James Gull from Schopenhauer as a review.

"In every instance the phenomenon of laughter indicates the sudden perception of an incongruity between a conception and a real object, which is to be understood as 'laughter' through (i. e., by means of) this incongruity. The greater and the more unexpected, the incongruity, the more violent will be our laughter."

Gull explains incongruity as

"lack of harmony and of mutual fitness.---A country woman displaying in her dress or in her speech a bizarre mixture of the peasant and the fine lady, a proposal to drink a martini in a high-heeled shoe.---These will at the moment of laughter be- cause they strike us as a forcing together of things which nature and reason to connect."

The subject of incongruity naturally falls into four divisions:

- 1) Laughter, for incongruity of ideas;
- 2) Opposites, for incongruity of objects in a situation;
- 3) Contradictions for incongruity of character, its sham, bluff, and hypocrisy;
- 4) Disparities, for promises without performance that make an action comic. Life is rich in such in- consistencies."

The second law of laughter explains why one will

laugh, and requires that one get out of his speculation of some incongruity a sudden sense of his own superiority."

53. 1914. p. 53.
54. Gull, James. As a Study on Laughter.
New York, Longmans, Green & Co. 1903. p. 180.
55. 1914. p. 108.
56. 1914. p. 53.
57. 1914. p. 53.

The third law of laughter determines when one will laugh, and is best expressed by Bergson, who states that laughter ^{must be accompanied by absence of feeling, for any emotion is a deadly foe to} "To him who feels life is a tragedy," as Horace Walpole said.

An analysis of the first principle of laughter reveals the sub-divisions into which language incongruity falls: "cacography, malapropisms, punning, the sustained pun, the architectural pun, the co-operative form, paradox, satire, irony and sarcasm."⁶⁹

"The second class of incongruities is in"objects suddenly brought together in situation as opposites."⁷⁰ Thus it is one always laughs to see a tall angular woman walking with a fat, short man.

"The third class of incongruities is made up of contradictions in those things that make character. --- A reformed pick pocket singing out of a hymn book and anxious not to let his right hand know what his left hand is doing in his neighbor's pocket illustrates."⁷¹

"The fourth class of incongruities is disparities or mere promise substituted for performance. Such incongruities associate themselves with action and are the most laughable."⁷² This type is clearly illustrated in the

68. Ibid. p. 31.
 69. Ibid. p. 35.
 70. Ibid. p. 36.
 71. Ibid. p. 36-37
 72. Ibid. p. 37

The third law of laughter determines when one will laugh, and is best expressed by Burton, who states that laughter, "is him who finds life is a tragedy," as Burton

Wells said.

An analysis of the first principle of laughter reveals the sub-divisions into which laughter necessarily falls: "accidents, misadventures, mishaps, the unexpected, the grotesque, the absurd, the co-operative force, paradox, satire, irony and sarcasm."

"The second class of incongruities is the 'opposites' suddenly brought together in situations of opposition. There it is one always laugh: to see a tall slender woman walking with a fat, short man."

"The third class of incongruities is made up of contradictions in those things that have character. --- A reference, pick pocket slipped out of a hymn book and exclaiming not to let his right hand know what his left hand is doing in his neighbor's pocket illustrated."

"The fourth class of incongruities is illustrated by mere actions substituted for performance. Such incongruities cause ourselves with action and are the most laughable." This type is clearly illustrated in the

68. 1916.	5. 31.
69. 1916.	6. 32.
70. 1916.	7. 33.
71. 1916.	8. 34-35
72. 1916.	9. 35

case of the boy who has his arm raised to throw a wad of paper-but suddenly sees the teacher and scratches his head instead.

It is a truism that all the world loves a cheerful person, and little wonder for, as Meredith says, " A perception of the Comic Spirit gives high fellowship. You become a citizen of the selecter world. -----Good hope sustains you; weariness does not overwhelm you; personal pride is greatly moderated."⁷³

Now that the range of Saxe's poetry, and the theory of laughter have been discussed, a critical analysis of the comedy devices used by Saxe will follow. An attempt will be made to include all the various types of incongruity which appear in his poetry, and mention will be made of those devices which the poet failed to use.

Of the first class of incongruities--language--the pun is by far the most frequently found in humorous writings. Even Shakespeare resorted to this comedy device.

"Not because it was a courtly practice so much, but because the pun is a form of wit easier for a young man since according to Addison it consists in a resemblance of the mere symbols of ideas, words, syllables, and even letters. Wit, Addison devines as a resemblance of ideas that give delight and surprise."⁷⁴

73. Meredith, George. An Essay on Comedy --p. 143-44.

74. Ibid p. 36.

case of the boy who has his arms raised to throw a web of
paper-let suddenly over the teacher and surrounds him
has been.

It is a vision that all the world loves a beautiful
person, and little wonder for, as Meredith says, "A
personification of the Good Spirit gives high fellowship."
You become a citizen of the radiant world. ---- Good
hope sustains you; weariness does not overwhelm you;
personal pride is greatly motivated."

Now that the range of Sans's poetry, and the theory
of laughter have been discussed, a critical analysis of
the comedy devices used by Sans will follow. An attempt
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Of the first class of incongruities--language--the
poet is by far the most frequently found in humorous
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"What because it was a comely practice so
much, but because the pen is a form of wit easier
for a young man than according to Addison it con-
sists in a resemblance of the more symbolic of
ideas, words, allusions, and even letters. Wit
Addison defines as a resemblance of ideas that
give delight and surprise."

A careful study of Saxe's poems readily shows his extensive use of the pun. Lines from The Proud Miss Mac Bride are illustrative:

"That her wit should never have made her vain,
Was, like her face, sufficiently plain;
And as to her musical powers,
Although she sang until she was hoarse,
And issued notes with a Banker's force,
They were just such notes as we never endorse
For any acquaintance of ours."⁷⁵

In the same poem Saxe referring to Miss MacBride's financial loss writes,

"But it wasn't strange, - they whispered at all;
That the Summer of pride should have its Fall
Was quite according to Nature."⁷⁶

The Rhyme of the Rail furnishes other examples of punning as in these lines:

"Market-woman careful
Of the precious casket,
Knowing eggs are eggs,
Tightly holds her basket;
Feeling that a smash,
If it came, would surely
Send her eggs to pot,⁷⁷
Rather prematurely."⁷⁷

Another instance of the poet's fondness for this device is seen throughout the poem, The Briefless Barrister, of which the following lines are typical.

"His breeches had suffered a breach,
His linen and worsted were worse;
He had scarce a whole crown in his hat
And not half a crown in his purse."⁷⁸

75. Saxe, John G.-Complete Poems--P. 11.

76. Ibid p. 13.

77. Ibid p. 20.

78. Ibid p. 20.

A careful study of the above readily shows the

extensive use of the term "line" from the above lines

and the following are illustrative:

"That her wit should never have made her vain,
 Her face, like her face, excellently plain;
 And as to her musical powers,
 Although she sang until she was hoarse,
 And learned notes with a scholar's force,
 They were just such notes as we never endorse
 For any acquaintance of ours."

In the same poem there is a reference to the following lines:

Financial loss written.

"That it would be a shame, - they whispered at all;
 That the owner of this should have the fall
 The whole according to nature."

The rhyme of the last line is another example of

rhyming as in these lines:

"Herbert's woman carried
 Of the previous cases,
 Knowing such was the
 Finally found her heart;
 Feeling that a smash
 It is done, would surely
 Send her back to rest
 Rather than otherwise."

Another instance of the poet's fondness for this

device is seen throughout the poem, The Wretched Barometer,

of which the following lines are typical.

"His forehead had suffered a smash,
 His lines and wrinkles were worse;
 He had scarce a whole crown in his hat
 And not half a crown in his purse."

72. Same, John G. Thompson, Poems--P. 11.	
73. Ibid. P. 12.	
74. Ibid. P. 13.	
75. Ibid. P. 14.	
76. Ibid. P. 15.	

Referring to the death of his briefless barrister,
Saxe writes,

"And as to the cause of his death,
'Twas no doubt for the want of a cause,
The Jury decided at length,
After solemnly weighing the matter,
That the lawyer was drowned, because
He could not keep his head above water!"⁷⁹

The Cold-Water Man furnishes another example of
punning:

Speaking of the unlettered fishman Saxe writes,

"He ne'er aspired to rank or wealth,
Nor cared about a name,-
For though much famed for fish was he,
He never fished for fame."⁸⁰

A series of puns is found in The Jolly Mariner.

Saxe describes the reaction of land sights on the sailor.

"The first of all the curious things
That chanced his eye to meet,
As this undaunted mariner
Went sailing up the street,
Was, tripping with a little cane
A dandy all complete!

He stopped, - that jolly mariner, -
And eyed the stranger well;-
'What that maybe?' he said, says he,
'Is more than I can tell;
But ne'er before, on sea or shore,
Was such a heavy swell!'

He met a lady in her hoops,
And thus she heard him hail;-
'Now blow me tight; but there's a sight

79. Ibid p. 20.

80. Ibid p. 23.

Referring to the death of his brilliant daughter,

Baron writes,

"And as to the cause of his death,
There no doubt for the want of a nurse,
The lady decided at length,
After solemnly weighing the matter,
That the lawyer was hanged, because
He could not keep his head above water."
The Gold-Master has furnished another example of

poorly:

Speaking of the unfortunate Frenchman Baron writes,

"He never seemed to lack of wealth,
Nor could about a name, -
Not through with him for this was he,
He never fitted for fame."

A review of him is found in The Jolly Mariner.

Baron describes the reaction of Lord Alphonse on the sailor.

"The first of all the curious things
That changed his eye to meet,
As this unshaven mariner
Went sailing on the street,
Was, typical with a little cane
A dandy all completed!

He stopped, - that jolly mariner, -
And eyed the stranger well; -
'What that wretch?' he said, 'aye he,
'Is more than I can tell;
But not before, on sea or shore,
Was such a heavy swell!'

He was a lady in her house,
And thus she heard him hail; -
'Now give me sight; but there's a sight

75. 1814 p. 80.
80. 1814 p. 80.

To manage in a gale!
 I never saw so small a craft
 With such a spread o' sail."⁸¹

Thus one sees that a great majority of Saxe's best known poems rely on punning for their humor.

Other comedy devices of this same language incongruity frequently used by Saxe were satire, irony, and sarcasm. In as much as satire has been discussed at some length in the section dealing with the range of the poet's work, a very brief mention will suffice to show the extensive use of this weapon made by Saxe.

The Way of the World cleverly satirizes the folly of parents sacrificing their daughter's happiness because her lover was poor, in a different social group, and of a different religious faith.

"A youth would marry a maiden,
 For fair and fond was she;
 But their sires disputed about the mass,
 And so it might not be.
 A couple of wicked kings,
 Three hundred years ago,
 Had played at a royal game of chess,
 And the Church had been a pawn!
 And so the cruel word was spoken
 And so it was two hearts were broken."⁸²

The above stanza is illustrative of satire, irony, and sarcasm all combined, for many of these devices are found in a single poem, and although one is more emphasized

81. Ibid p. 51.

82. Ibid p. 8.

To make in a tale
I never saw so early a child
With such a sense of self.

There are some that a great majority of Saxons have
known come only on account of their humor.
Other comedy devices of this same language known-
ingly frequently used by Saxons were satire, irony, and
sarcasm. In as much as satire has been discussed at
some length in the section dealing with the range of the
poetic work, a very brief mention will suffice to show
the extensive use of this weapon made by Saxons.
The Way of the World cleverly satirizes the folly of
persons sacrificing their happiness to business because
her lover was poor, in a different social group, and of a
different religious faith.

"A youth would marry a maiden,
For fair and fond was she;
But their eyes clasped about the waist,
And so it might not be.
A couple of wicked things,
Three hundred years ago,
Had played at a royal game of chess,
And the church had been a pawn!
And so the story was spoken
And so it was two hearts were broken."

The above stanza is illustrative of satire, irony,
and sarcasm all combined. For many of these devices are
found in a single poem, and though one is more emphasized

than the others.

The Mourner a la Mode, a poem which satirizes the fashionable widow, lacking feeling, whose mourning is expressed in beautifully becoming clothes, combines these three closely connected devices.

"Yet I know she was suffering sorrow
Too deep for the tongue to express,-
Or why had she chosen to borrow
So much from the language of dress?

And the grief that was heaving her breast
Boiled over in billows of crape!

And yet as I viewed, at my leisure,
Those tokens of tender regard,
I thought: -It is scarce without measure-
The sorrow that goes by the yard!" 83

The Proud Miss Mac Bride is a bitter satire on family pride in ancestors, pride of family wealth, pride in everything "beyond comparison."

The idle rich who spend their time at Saratoga furnished the poet with material for one of his keen satires, Cloe to Clara, The follies of the lawyer, preacher, flippant tourist and "shallow dandy" provided material for the satire entitled, The Blarney Stone.⁸⁴

However, Ode to the Legislature is most outstanding for its bitter denunciation of legislators--

"And thus, with greater cause,
Would we respect the Laws
(Which should be revered to be obeyed),
It isn't best to see them made."⁸⁵

83. Ibid p. 9.
84. Ibid p. 65.
85. Ibid p. 104.

than the others.

The Monks in the Hall, a poem which celebrates the
 fashionable widow, lacking feeling, whose mourning is
 expressed in beautifully becoming clothes, combines these
 three closely connected devices.

"Let I know the man who will
 And then for the moment to express
 Or why has she chosen to follow
 So much from the language of dress?"
 And the girl, that was leaving her dress
 Told over in a little of dress.

And yet as I viewed, at my leisure,
 Those robes of tender regard,
 I thought: - it is better without measure
 The sorrow that goes by the name of dress.

The Green Mill and the Green Mill is a bitter satire on
 family pride in ancestors, pride of family wealth, pride
 in everything beyond comparison.

The idle rich who spend their time at Bath
 Turned the poet with material for one of his poems
 called, Green Mill and the Green Mill, the father of the lawyer,
 treasurer, biggest lawyer and "millionaire" provided
 material for the satire entitled, The Green Mill.
 However, On the Larkspur is most interesting
 for its bitter denunciation of legislators--

"And then, with greater care,
 Would we regard the law
 (Which should be reverence to the people),
 It had best to see than make."

25. 1914	25. 1914
26. 1915	26. 1915
27. 1916	27. 1916

Saxe was a lover of sincerity and strongly disliked pretence of all kinds, and those people who practiced any deception were frequently the butt of his pen. A Charming Woman is typical of this type of poetry.

"A charming woman, I've heard it said
 By other women as light as she;
 But all in vain I puzzle my head
 To find wherein the charm may be.
 Her face, indeed, is pretty enough,
 And her form is quite as good as
 the best,
 Where Nature has given the bony stuff,
 And a clever milliner all the rest.

Intelligent? Yes, - in a certain way;
 With a feminine gift of ready speech;
 And knows very well what not to say
 Whenever the theme transcends her
 reach.

But turn the topic on things to wear,
 From an opera cloak to a robe de
nuit, -
 Hats, basques, or bonnets, - 't will
 make you stare
 To see how fluent the lady can be!

Her laugh is hardly a thing to please;
 For an honest laugh must always
 start
 From a gleesome mood, like a sudden
 breeze,
 And hers is purely a matter of art, -
 A muscular motion made to show
 What Nature designed to lie beneath
 The finer mouth; but what can she do,
 If that is ruined to show the teeth?

To her seat in church- a good half-
 mile-
 When the day is fine she is sure to go,
 Arrayed, of course, in the latest style
La mode de Paris has got to show;
 And she puts her hands on the velvet
 pew
 (Can hands so white have a taint of
 sin?)
 And thinks- how her prayer-book's
 tint of blue
 Must harmonize with her milky skin!

There was a tower of electricity and magnetic fields
presence of all these, and those people who practiced any

deception were frequently the best of his best. A

Charming woman is typical of this type of beauty.

"A charming woman, I've heard it said
By other women as light as she;
But all is vain I guess my head
To find what's in the charm my head
Her face, indeed, is pretty enough,
And her form is quite as good as

the best,
Where Nature has given the body a gift,
And a clever mistress all the rest.

Intelligent? Yes, - in a certain way;
With a feminine gift of ready speech;
And knows very well what not to say
Whenever the theme transpires her

reach.
But when the topic on things is near,
From an open clock to a clock in

the hall,
Back, however, or forward, - it will
Make you stare
To see how clever the lady can be!

Her laugh is hardly a thing to please;
For an honest laugh most always
Starts

from a pleasant mood, like a sudden
breath.

And here is surely a matter of art,
A question of motion made to show
What Nature designed to be beneath
The finer mouth; but what can she do,
If that is talent is when the truth?

To her seat in shadow - a good half-
mile -

When the day is fine she is sure to go,
Arrived, of course, in the latest style

in which she wears her hat to show;
And the hair that hangs on the velvet

her
(Don't forget to write her a letter at
least)

And indeed has her great-grand-
father's

first of class
Must have been with her very early!

Ah! what shall we say of one who walks
 In fields of flowers to choose the
 weeds?
 Reads authors of whom she never
 talks,
 And talks of authors she never reads?
 She's a charming woman, I've heard
 it said
 By other women as light as she;
 But all in vain I puzzle my head
 To find wherein the charm may be."⁸⁶

The use of cagography as a comedy device, so frequently used by Bret Harte, Artemus Ward, and the Western Humorists, was used most sparingly by Saxe. The three poems, The Cockney, Ye Pedagogue, and Paddy's Ode to the Prince begins:

"O Mighty Prince!
 It's no offense,
 Your worship, that I mane ye,
 While I confess
 'T was ra-al bliss,
 A moment to have sane ye."⁸⁷

Ye Pedagogue furnishes a clever use of cacography as in such lines as:

"For as 'tis meete to soake ye feete,
 Ye ailinge heade to mende,
 Ye younker's pate to stimulate,
 He beats ye other ende!"⁸⁸

The dialect of the unschooled Englishman is recorded in The Cockney.

86. Ibid p. 99.
 87. Ibid p. 80.
 88. Ibid p. 58.

All that shall be said of the world
 is little of flowers to those who
 would
 Hence, and of the world and away
 And let the world be never found
 She's a beautiful woman, live here
 It will
 By other women as light as air;
 But all in vain I pass by her
 To find wherein she differs from me.

The use of geography as a comedy device is frequent-

ly used by most writers, Aristotle, and the Eastern
 Philosophers was used most frequently by Greek. The three poems,

The Bookman, Ye Pedagogue, and Pedagogue's Ode to the Prince

begin:

"O Mighty Prince!
 It's no offense,
 Your worship, that I name you,
 While I converse
 'Tis my usual bliss,
 A moment to have seen you."

Ye Pedagogue furnishes a clever use of geography as

is much like as:

"For as 'tis known to us, ye learn,
 Ye all have heard of wonder,
 Ye knower's name is slighted,
 As being ye other world."

The effect of the unexplained Englishman is repeated

in The Bookman.

85. 1914	P. 85.
87. 1914	P. 80.
88. 1914	P. 85.

"When I named the Colosseum,
 He observed, ' 'Tis very fair;
 I mean, ye know, it would be,
 If they'd put it in repaid;
 But what progress on himprovement
 Can those curst Hitalians 'ope
 While they're hunder the dominion
 Of that blasted muff, the Pope?"⁸⁹

That Saxe was unfamiliar with the second class of incongruities - objects suddenly brought together in situation as opposites - may be justly inferred by his infrequent use of this device. In the Rhyme of the Rail is found his nearest approach to this principle.

"Gentleman in shorts,
 Looming very tall;
 Gentleman at large,
 Talking very small
 Gentleman in tights,
 With a loose-ish mien;
 Gentleman in gray
 Looking rather green.

Gentleman quite old,
 Asking for the news
 Gentleman in black,
 In a fit of blues;
 Gentleman in claret,
 Sober as a vicar;
 Gentleman in tweed
 Dreadfully in liquor."⁹⁰

One of the few poems illustrating the third class of incongruities - contradictions in those things that make character - is The Best of Husbands which follows in its entirety.

89. Ibid p. 29.

90. Ibid p. 19.

When I asked the Professor,
He observed, 'The very fact;
I mean, to know, it would be
it that's not in regard;
But what progress on improvement
For those great historical
While they're under the dominion
Of that blessed soul, the Pope?

That same was familiar with the second class of
incongruities - objects and objects together in
situation as opposites - may be easily inferred by his
interference of this device. In the Story of the Fall
is found his nearest approach to this principle.

Gentleman in white,
Looking very tall;
Gentleman in black,
Looking very small;
Gentleman in white,
With a loose-fitting waist;
Gentleman in grey,
Looking rather stout.

Gentleman with a
Aster for the nose,
Gentleman in black,
In a bit of black;
Gentleman in white,
Robert as a victor;
Gentleman in black,
Gentleman in white.

One of the two poems illustrating the third class of
incongruities - contradictions in these things that make
character - is The Post of Hesperus which follows in the
entirety.

90. 1913
90. 1913

"Oh I have a man as good as can be,
 No woman could wish for a better than he.
 Sometimes, indeed, he may chance to be
 wrong,
 But his love for me is uncommonly
 strong.

He has one little fault that makes me
 fret,
 He has ever less money, by far, than
 debt;
 Moreover, he thrashes me now and then;
 But, excepting that, he's the best of
 men!

I own he is dreadfully given to drink,
 Besides, he is rather too fond, I think,
 Of playing at cards and dice; but then,
 Excepting that, he's the best of men!

He loves to chat with the girls, I
 know
 ('Tis the way with men, they are al-
 ways so).
 But what care I for his flirting, when,
 Excepting that, he's the best of men?

When soaked with rum, he is hardly po-
 lite,
 But knocks the crockery left and right,
 And pulls my hair, and growls again;
 But, excepting that, he's the best of
 men!

I can't but say I think he is rash
 To pawn my pewter, and spend the
 cash,
 But I haven't the heart to schold him,
 when,
 Excepting that, he's the best of men!

What joy to think he's all my own!
 The best of husbands that ever was
 known;
 As good, indeed, as a man can be;
 And who could wish for a better than
 he?"⁹¹

"Oh I have a plan as good as any,
 No more words with for a better than
 Sometimes, indeed, he says things to be
 strong,
 But his love for me is unreasonably
 strong."

He has one little fault that makes me
 first,
 He has even less money, by far, than
 I do;
 Moreover, he likes me now and then;
 But, excepting that, he's the best of
 men!

I am he is greedily given to drink,
 Besides, he is rather too fond, I think,
 Of playing at cards and dice; but then,
 Excepting that, he's the best of men!

He loves to chat with the girls, I
 know,
 (The way with men, they are al-
 ways so).

But what care I for his flirting, when,
 Excepting that, he's the best of men?
 When asked with him, he is hardly go-
 ing,
 But knocks the cruetery left and right;
 And while my hair, and brows are bright;
 But, excepting that, he's the best of
 men!

I can't but say I think he is worth
 To pawn my master, and spend the
 cash,
 But I never let the heart be sold him,
 when,
 Excepting that, he's the best of men!

What joy to think he's all my own!
 The best of husbands that ever was
 known;
 As good, indeed, as a son can be;
 And one could wish for a better than
 any!

No careful or sympathetic reader of Saxe's poems can refrain from feeling a deep regret that the poet did not use a more varied list of comic devices. One wonders why Saxe so complete disregarded such an important class of incongruity as "disparities or mere promise substituted for performance." Apparently he did not realize the significance of the old saying, "Actions speak louder than words," nor did he seem aware that neglecting to use all known comic devices was materially narrowing his range of poetry, as well as impairing his own success. In this same connection one wonders why Saxe's poems furnish no examples of sustained pun, architectural pun, and the co-operative form.

Even a casual reading of Saxe's poems makes one cognizant of the over-use of the didactic or moralistic, for numbers of them seem to have been written solely to teach a lesson. Sometimes this is done indirectly, but very frequently the poet's last stanza is headed "moral," followed by the lines of advice, or lesson which the writer wished to teach. Possibly this sermonizing idea in Saxe is due to his Puritanical environment which at that time would still be actively reminiscent of the old time piety of the Puritans. Or again this tendency may be the result of strong desire to right wrongs in whatever walk of life he found them, and Saxe's method of reform was his

No doubt of systematic reader of Baker's poems can
 believe that feeling a deep regret that the poet did not
 see a more vital list of comic writers. The poems are
 here as complete as intended even in important cases of
 incompleteness as "The Poet" or more perfect rephrasing
 for performance. Apparently he did not realize the
 significance of the old saying, "Actions speak louder than
 words," nor did he seem aware that according to the old
 known comic device was a carefully constructed line of
 poetry, as well as depicting his own success. In this
 new connection one wonders why Baker's poems should be
 examples of sustained but, structural form, and the co-
 operative form.

Even a casual reading of Baker's poems makes one
 cognizant of the over-use of the didactic or moralistic,
 for numbers of them seem to have been written solely to
 teach a lesson. Sometimes this is done indirectly, but
 very frequently the poet's last stanza is headed "moral,"
 followed by the lines of advice, or lesson which the writer
 wished to teach. Possibly this reprehensible idea in Baker
 is due to his traditional equipment which at that time
 would still be actively prominent at the time play
 of the future. Or again this tendency may be the re-
 sult of strong desire to right wrongs in whatever walk of
 life he found them, and Baker's method of reform was his

pen. Illustrations of the "moral" concluding a poem follow:
The last stanza of the popular poem The Proud Miss MacBride
reads,

"Moral
Because you flourish in worldly affairs,
Don't be haughty, and put on airs,
With insolvent pride of station!
Don't be proud, and turn up your nose
At poorer people in palmer clo'es,
But learn, for the sake of your soul's repose,
That wealth's a bubble, that comes,- and goes!
And that all Proud Flesh, wher^{er} it grows,
Is subject to irritation!

Again in The Cold-Water Man Saxe cannot refrain from
teaching:

"The moral of this mournful tale,
To all is plain and clear,-
That drinking habits bring a man
Too often to his bier;

And he who scorns to 'take the pledge,'
And keep the promise fast,
May be, in spite of fate, a stiff
Cold Water Man at last!"⁹³

The didactic steals in again in Tale of A Dog which
is concluded by the lines,

"The Moral surely isn't hard to reap;-
Be prompt to listen unto mercy's plea;
The good you get, diffuse; it will not hurt you
E'En from a dog to learn a christian virtue."⁹⁴

Saxe's strong dislike of drinking furnished thought
for many of these moralistic poems. The Ghost-Player,

92. Ibid p. 13.
93. Ibid p. 23.
94. Ibid p. 51.

part. Illustrations of the "moral" conclusion are given below:
The last stanza of the popular poem The Good and Beautiful
reads:

"Moral
Because you thought it worthy of praise,
Don't be hungry, and don't be poor,
With innocent pride of station!
Don't be proud, and turn up your nose
At poorer people in palmy climes,
But learn, for the sake of your soul's repose,
That wealth is a bubble, that comes, and goes!
And that all proud things, whatever is shown,
Is subject to dissolution!"

Again in The Good and Beautiful we find the same refrain from

teaching:
"The moral of this wonderful tale,
To all is plain and clear,
That drinking water brings a man
Too often to his death;

And he who sows to sow the seed,
And reap the golden yield,
May be, in spite of love, a thief
Who's water men at last!"

The classic stanza is again in The Good and Beautiful

is completed by the lines,

"The moral surely isn't hard to teach:-
Be prompt to listen when people's glad;
The good for evil, different; it will not pass
Even from a dog to learn a Christian virtue."

For a strong simile of drinking furnished in a song

for many of these metaphoric poems. The Good and Beautiful

92. 1914	P. 13.
93. 1915	P. 23.
94. 1916	P. 31.

"Now, Tom was very fond of drink,
Of almost every sort,
Comparative and positive,
From porter up to port.

But grog, like grief, is fatal stuff
For any man to sup;
For when it fails to pull him down,
It's sure to blow him up."⁹⁵

Sometimes this moral appears in the main part of the poem as in The Nobleman The Fisherman, and the Porter.

"So fare all villians, quote my lord,
Who seek dishonest gain!"⁹⁶

Another much quoted poem in school books, The Blind Men and the Elephant contains a deeper moral, perhaps an expression of Saxe's personal dislike of the narrowness of New England Puritanism. The lines follow:

"Moral
So oft in theologic wars,
The disputants, I ween,
Rail on in utter ignorance
Of what each other mean,
And prate about an Elephant,
Not one of them has seen!"⁹⁷

Saxe's love of the didactic, so opposite to Poe's theory of verse is well expressed in his own verse found in King Solomon and the Bees.

"My story teaches (every tale should bear
A fitting moral) that the wise may find,
In trifles light as atoms in the air,
Some useful lesson to enrich the mind,
Some truth designed to profit or to please,
As Israel's King learned wisdom from
the bees."⁹⁸

-
95. Ibid p. 44.
96. Ibid p. 114.
97. Ibid p. 112.
98. Ibid p. 138.

Now, you see very soon of course,
Of almost every sort,
Cooperative and positive,
From better to best.

But again, this child, in that story,
For any man to say;
For when it falls to him to show,
It's sure to show him so.

Consequently this child appears in the main part of the

book as in The Nobleman The Librarian, and The Father.

And here all children, young or old,
Who seek instruction find.

Another such story in school books, The Blind

and the Elephant contain a deeper moral, perhaps an

expression of some of the national spirit of the nation.

of New England children. The lines follow:

"Moral"
So oft in theologic wars,
The Librarian, I mean,
Said on his after-noon
Of what each other was,
And still about an Elephant,
Not one of them was seen.

Some of the love of the Librarian, so opposite to some

theory of verse is well expressed in his own verse found

in King Solomon and the Tree.

My story teacher (every tale should bear
A living moral) that the wise may find,
In simple light as clear as the air,
Some useful lesson to enrich the mind,
Some truth designed to profit or to please,
As Israel's King learned wisdom from
The tree.

92. 1913	P. 113.
93. 1913	P. 113.
94. 1913	P. 113.
95. 1913	P. 113.

And again the ever-present moral comes to view in
The Romance of Nick Van Stann,

"Ah! well, his blessings came so fast
 I greatly feared they couldn't last;
 And thus we see the sword of Fate⁹⁹
 Cuts down alike the small and great!"

Even in poems dealing with mythological subjects,
 Saxe could not refrain from moralizing. Icarus contains
 this message:

" L'envoi
 The moral of this mournful tale is plain
 enough to all;-
 Don't get above your proper sphere, or
 you may chance to fall;
 Remember, too, that borrowed plumes
 are most uncertain things;
 And never try to scale the sky with
 other people's wings!"¹⁰⁰

A second characteristic of Saxe's poetry which
 proves a handicap to the poet's popularity is his over-
 use of literary allusions. In short, Saxe frequently
 writes for the academic mind, and alludes to a great
 number of persons and things familiar only to the
 scholar. In this way Saxe has diminished his audience
 greatly. Sometimes foreign phrases form a part of the
 stanza or of a title as in My Castle in Spain, the last
 stanza begins:

99. Ibid p. 141.
 100. Ibid p. 230.

And again the ever-present moral comes to view in

The Homage of King Lear

"Ah! well, his blessing came so late
I scarcely feared that Oswald's hand;
And thus we see the worst of fate
Come down like the small and great!"

Even in poems dealing with psychological subjects,
Lear could not refrain from moralizing. Learning contains

this message:

"I never
The moral of this mortal tale is plain
Enough to all:
Don't get above your proper sphere, or
You may chance to fall;
Remember, too, that harvest plumes
Are most uncertain things;
And never try to scale the sky with
Other people's wings!"

A second characteristic of Lear's poetry which
proves a handicap to the poet's popularity is his over-
use of literary allusions. In short, Lear frequently
writes for the academic mind, and alludes to a great
number of persons and things familiar only to the
scholar. In this way Lear has distanced his audience
greatly. Sometimes foreign phrases form a part of the
texture of a title as in My English in Spain, the last

stanza begins:

99. 1918	P. 141.
100. 1918	P. 230.
101. 1918	P. 231.

"O si sic semper!" I oftentimes say
 (Though 't is idle, I know, to com-
 plain),
 To think that again I must force me
 away
 From my beautiful castle in Spain!"¹⁰¹

Again the expression Spes Est Vates furnishes
 the title of a poem.¹⁰²

In Compensation, one of the more serious of his
 poems occur in each stanza the lines,

"Si longa, levis;
 Si dura, brevis."

In Maximilian reference to the Bible occurs in the
 stanza beginning;

"I loathe the rude, barbaric wrath
 That slew thee in thy vent'rous path;
 But 'they who take', thus saith the Lord,
 'Shall also perish by the sword'
 Doomed Maximillian!"¹⁰³

Biographical facts make frequent reference to Saxe's
 profound knowledge and love of the Greek and Roman classics.
 The truth of this fact is apparent in the great number of
 allusions which Saxe makes to the old writers. For in-
 stance in The Masquerade, the poet has used an entire
 epigram from "Homer II., XIV. 217".¹⁰⁴ And in the same
 poem occur such foreign expressions as

101. Ibid p. 3.
 102. Ibid p. 3.
 103. Ibid p. 7.
 104. Ibid p. 14.

"O also answer!" I often hear say
(Though 'tis idle, I know, to con-
plain),
To think that again I must force me
away
From my beautiful castle in Spain!"¹⁰¹

Again the expression From my beautiful castle in Spain

the title of a poem.¹⁰²

In Compendium, one of the more serious of his

poems occur in each stanza the lines,

"St longer, longer;
St shorter, briefer."

In Maximilian reference to the Bible occurs in the

stanza beginning:

"I loathe the robe, barbaric wreath
That also has in thy vestment
But 'they who take', thus with the Lord,
'shall also perish by the sword';
Doomed Maximilian!"¹⁰³

Historical facts make frequent reference to Max's

profound knowledge and love of the Greek and Roman classics.

The truth of this fact is apparent in the great number of

allusions which Max makes to the old writers. For in-

stance in Maximilian, the poet has used an allu-

sion from "Homer II., XIV. 215." And in the same¹⁰⁴

poem occur such foreign expressions as

101. 101b	p. 3.
102. 101b	p. 3.
103. 101b	p. 7.
104. 101b	p. 14.

"infelicissimus, censor morum, Le Demi-Monde, bel-esprit, Mon Dieu, Maximus Apollo, Parbleu, C'est vrai, Solus cum sola, quelle merveille, Quelle felicite, Dieu de ciel!"¹⁰⁵

Consequently, it is little wonder that Saxe did not make a stronger appeal to the man of the street, for these expressions are discouraging to one unfamiliar with foreign languages.

Love and Law, a satire on parents, one ambitious for their children to make suitable marriages, contains numerous Latin phrases; and Mr. Familiar, clever description of the "bore" the "friend who comes - but never goes;, has the epigram "Ecce iterum Crispimus".¹⁰⁶ A Connubial Eclogue likewise has a short quotation from Virgil as an epigram,

"Arcades ambo,
Et cantare pares et respondere parati."¹⁰⁷

Saxe's familiarity with Greek and Roman mythology is apparent by his over-frequent reference ^{illustrations} to it throughout many of his poems. Such lines as,

"You'll find her a delicate Heb,
And not your magnificent Juno,"

taken from A Rhymed Epistle (written to the editor of the Knickerbocker Magazine) are illustrative. This same poem furnishes another reference to Saxe's literary allusions;

105. Ibid p. 14-16.
106. Ibid p. 17.
107. Ibid p. 24.

Epigram 107. Latin text. See also Epigram 107.
Epigram 107. Latin text. See also Epigram 107.
Epigram 107. Latin text. See also Epigram 107.

Consequently, it is little wonder that Boccaccio did not

make a stronger appeal to the ear of the street, for

these expressions are disconcerting to one unfamiliar

with foreign languages.

Love and law, a battle on parade, one ambitious

for their children to make suitable marriages, contains

many Latin phrases; and Mr. Tuckwell, clever de-

scription of the "book" the "friend who comes - but never

poet; has the epigram "Epigram 107." A

Compendium Epigram 107 has a short quotation from

Vergil as an epigram.

"Epigram 107."

It contains many of the same phrases as 107.

Boccaccio's familiarity with Greek and Roman mythology

is apparent by his over-frequent reference to it through-

out many of his poems. Such lines as

"You'll find her a delicate job,
 And not your magnificent turn."

taken from Aeneid (written to the editor of the

Epigram 107. Latin text. See also Epigram 107. This same poem

contains another reference to Boccaccio's literary allusions:

107.	107.	p. 107.
108.	108.	p. 107.
109.	109.	p. 107.

"Now I am a man, you must learn,
 Less famous to beauty than strength,
 And for aught I could ever discern,
 Of rather superfluous length.
 In truth 't is but seldom one meets
 Such a Titan in human abodes,
 And when I stalk over the streets,
 I'm a perfect Colossus of roads!"¹⁰⁸

A similar reference to mythology occurs in a stanza from The Proud Miss Mac Bride which begins:

" No rara avis was honest John,
 (That's the Latin for 'sable swan'),
 Though in one of his fancy flashes,
 A wicked wag, who meant to deride,
 Called honest John 'Old Phoenix Mac Bride'
 Because he rose from his ashes!"¹⁰⁹

Saxe combines classical allusions with a knowledge of astronomy in Icarus.

"His only son was Icarus, a most
 precocious lad,
 The pride of Mrs. Daedalus, the image of his dad;
 ----How very charming it would be
 above the moon to climb,
 And scamper through the Zodiac, and have
 a high old time
 Oh wouldn't it be jolly, though, - to stop
 at all the inns;
 To take a luncheon at 'The Crab' and
 tippie at 'The Twins;
 And, just for fun and fancy, while
 careering through the air,
 To kiss the Virgin, tease the Ram, and
 bait the biggest Bear?"¹¹⁰

108. Ibid p. 59.
 109. Ibid p. 11.
 110. Ibid p. 230.

CHAPTER V

AN EVALUATION OF JOHN GODFREY SAXE
 WITH A SELECTED LIST OF HIS POEMS
 WORTHY OF A PLACE IN AMERICAN LETTERS

In evaluating any writer one must take into account both assets and liabilities in a poet's work. As may be concluded from the foregoing analysis of Saxe's poems, one defect of his work was the presence of too few comic devices, in his poetry; the over-use of the pun, satire, irony, and sarcasm. Another barrier to Saxe's popularity was the too frequent moralizing in so many of the poems, and the over-abundant number of literary allusions. This last named characteristic must from necessity eliminate large numbers of people from any enjoyment of his poetry.

By some critics, Saxe is considered a moderate punner, who never offends. "He sharpens carelessly antithesis. He is always neat, makes his point, gets his laugh." Of interest to critical students of Saxe's poetry is the comment made by William Cullen Bryant on the popular poem, The Proud Miss Mac Bride.

"As early as May 1853 William Cullen Bryant wrote of The Proud Miss Mac Bride: ' This delightful

poem shows an uncommon facility for versification. You will not find a single nonsensical or slovenly line in the entire book. No slipshod English and no rough edges or loose ends. Saxe's heroic couplets, we are inclined to think, are the best of their kind that America has yet produced, and quite lately, with other of Saxe's measures, they have had much currency given them by the English and the Scotch papers. '"

A SUGGESTED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF
SAXE'S POEMS WORTHY OF BEING KEPT
ALIVE IN AMERICAN LETTERS

Bereavement

Best of husbands, The

Blarney Stone, The

Blind men and the Elephant, The

Briefless Barrister, The

Candid Candidate, A

Carmen Laetum

Charming Woman, A

Cockney, The

Cold-Water Man, The

Early Rising

Here and Hereafter

Jolly Mariner, The

King Solomon and The Bees

Library, The

Little Jerry the Miller

Misere Domine

Money-King, The

Mourner a la mode, The

My Familiar

News

Ode to the Legislature

Post Prandial Verses

Progress

Proud, Miss Mac Bride, The

Rhyme of the Rail

Song of Saratoga

Stammering Wife, The

Way of the World, The

Ye Pedagogue

That Saxe has a place in American literature may be rightly assumed from the fact that as recently as 1905 The Mac Millan Publishing Company issued a collection of the poet's most popular poems. And, of course, no commercial publishing house would do this unless there was a demand for these poems on the part of the reading public.

Another incident to prove that Saxe is still alive comes from the pen of Professor Arthur W. Peach who wrote in a personal letter,

"As a matter of fact, Saxe is very much alive. Once in my nefarious career, I subscribed to a clipping bureau and asked them to send me cuttings of Saxe's poems. I called a halt when one hundred came in. The point is he is one of the most quoted in newspapers of the poets of his day or any day here in America. Stevenson's Home Book of Verse reprints thirteen of his poems - a larger number than more famous writers of Saxe's time are given."

The above evidence that Saxe is still alive is significant because as one can briefly show Saxe did not live a Gulliver among the Lilliputians. It is, therefore, well to review Saxe's time and environment. Saxe lived in the East, and as one critic has expressed it was a victim of the East, which was so filled with classical and academic traditions. Consequently, he felt obliged to write according to the old conventional,

accepted academic standards. The Western Humorists, of whom Bret Harte is a typical representative, were free from the shackles of the literary East. They based their work on the philosophy of democracy, the equality of man, and always placed the emphasis on human values. It would, then, be natural to expect that writers dealing with flesh and blood topics would be more popular with the general public than a literary poet writing according to literary standards.

SUMMARY

This thesis has discussed two main topics: an analysis of Saxe's humor, with some classification and criticism of his comedy devices, with reference to the conditions, political, social, and local that determined them and made his range; a revised and more complete bibliography of John Godfrey Saxe than has previously existed.

The once preeminently popular poet, John Godfrey Saxe, who was also humorist, lawyer, editor, lyceum lecturer, and state's attorney, was born in Highgate, Vermont, on June 2, 1816. He was the son of Elizabeth Jewett and Peter Saxe, store-keeper, mill-owner, and local politician.

Saxe's early years were uneventful. From the age of nine to seventeen he attended the district school and worked in his father's mill. In 1835 he entered Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut, but he did not complete his freshman year. The following fall he entered the sophomore class of Middlebury College, from which institution he graduated in 1839. After his graduation he went to Lewiston, New York, to study law, and in September, 1843, Saxe was admitted to the bar in St. Albans.

Since the practice of law proved irksome to Saxe, after seven years he abandoned it. In 1850 he purchased The Vermont Sentinel, a Democratic weekly published in Burlington, Vermont. He edited this paper for six years. In 1856 he was appointed U.S. deputy collector of customs. In 1846 Saxe's first published volume came from the press, Progress, a Satire. In

Summary

This article has discussed the main topics: an analysis of
 Bax's career, with some classification and criticism of his literary
 activities with reference to the standards, political, social, and
 local that determined them and made his career; a revised and more
 complete bibliography of John Bax's work than the previously
 existed.

The above presentation of popular poet, John Bax's work, and
 was also mentioned, lawyer, editor, literary lecturer, and Bax's
 activities, are born in Hampshire, Vermont, on June 2, 1884. He
 was the son of Elizabeth Bax and James Bax, store-keeper,
 Mill-Street, and local politician.

Bax's early years were uneventful. From the age of nine
 to seventeen he attended the district school and worked in his
 father's mill. In 1898 he entered Wesleyan University, Middle-
 town, Connecticut, and he did not complete his freshman year.
 The following fall he entered the sophomore class at Middlebury
 College, first which institution he graduated in 1902. After
 his graduation he went to London, New York, to study law,
 and in September, 1902, Bax was admitted to the bar in St.
 Albans.

After the practice of law proved tiresome to Bax, after
 seven years he abandoned it. In 1900 he purchased the Vermont
 Sentinel, a Democratic weekly published in Burlington, Vermont.
 He edited this paper for six years. In 1906 he was appointed
 U.S. Deputy Collector of Customs. In 1908 Bax's first pub-
 lished volume came from the press, Progress, a Satire. In

1860 he returned to Albany, New York, where he became editor of the Evening Journal. He was also a contributor to the Albany Morning Argus. In 1867 Saxe visited Europe. While in England, he was the guest of George Peabody, who was helpful in arranging for him to give a series of lectures. No mention of Saxe's varied career would have been complete without reference to his popularity as a lecturer. He began this work in 1846, and was sought from Maine to California.

The last decade of the once exuberant poet's life was enshrouded in melancholy. In seven years death had claimed six of his immediate family; so it is little wonder that death seemed to him his best friend. His melancholia deepened; his release came on March 31, 1887. The state of Vermont has erected at the old homestead at Highgate a monument to his memory, which was unveiled in August, 1920.

This thesis has made a cursory survey of American humorists, among whom were included Franklin, Irving, Holmes, Saxe, Lowell, Artemus Ward, Mark Twain, and James Whitcomb Riley. The Western humorists, Derby, Hay, Browne, and Bret Harte, were the first "to embody in literary form this new autochthonic American humor", which was characterized by "irreverence, exaggeration, and a skilful mingling of the incongruities."

Saxe's range of poetry was discussed under the topics vocational, occasional, social, personal, religious, democracy, local, and satires. As these were representative of phases of the poet's life, they fittingly contributed the subject matter or background for the majority of the poet's work.

Though Saxe never enjoyed the practice of law, yet this profession afforded him material for some of his best-known poems. Despite the fact that the greater part of Saxe's poems were written in a humorous, satirical vein, yet his last collection of verse, Leisure Day Rhymes, gave evidence that he thought and wrote about deeper and more religious subjects. The poem Here and Hereafter expresses Saxe's own theological views, while the beautiful hymn Misere Domine continues his broad, liberal views on theology.

Saxe's love of democracy in regard to financial equality and his intense dislike of the idle rich are keenly sensed in his bitter satire, The Money King. The poet had a profound love for satirizing the foibles of his day. All subjects from the legislature to the idiosyncracies of woman's dress furnished Saxe material for his popular satires.

This thesis next analyzed the comedy devices used by the poet. Of the first class of incongruities--language--the pun is most frequently found in humorous writings. This form Saxe used over extensively in his poetry. Other comedy devices of this same language incongruity frequently used by Saxe were satire, irony, and sarcasm. Often these three devices were found in the same poem as in the Way of the World. Cacography was used infrequently by Saxe. It is found in three poems only. No examples of sustained pun, architectural pun, or the cooperative form were found in his poems. His overuse of literary allusions, as well as his too frequent reference to Greek and Roman mythology, greatly limited his audience to the academic mind.

...the same never changes the position of law, but this position
...with reference to his position for some of his best-known poems.
...the fact that the greatest part of Gerson's poems were written
...in a humorous, satirical style, and his last collection of
...poems, Le Livre de l'Homme, gave evidence that he thought and
...wrote about death and more serious subjects. The poem Le Livre
...and Le Livre de l'Homme Gerson's two most important poems, while the
...most important poem Le Livre de l'Homme Gerson's most important poem, liberal verse
...on theology.

Gerson's view of democracy is related to financial equality
and his interest in the rights of the rich and wealthy seemed to
be his chief motive. Le Livre de l'Homme. The poem had a profound
love for humanity, the rights of the poor. All subjects from
the legal right to the independence of woman's dress furnished
rich material for his popular satires.

This thesis does not analyze the many poems used by the
poet. Of the first class of independent--language--the poem
is most frequently found in humorous satires. This form was
used over extensively in his poetry. Other poems devoted to
this new language frequently treated by Gerson were
satire, irony, and sarcasm. Other these three devices were
found in the same poem as in the key of the world. Democracy
was used infrequently by Gerson. It is found in three poems only.
No examples of sarcasm, irony, or epigrammatic form, or the opposite
five forms were found in his poems. His overuse of literary al-
lusions, as well as his too frequent reference to Greek and
Roman mythology, greatly limited his response to the condition

Saxe's place in American literature has been discussed and the fact recorded that he was a victim of the East and its classical and academic traditions.

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